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CHRISTMAS AT SEA.

NOT only unto hearts at home
Returns the merry Christmas-time,
But wanderers o'er the ocean's foam
Hear in their dreams the chime

Of happy bells, and homeward turn
Their longing eyes, and cheeks that burn,
Amid the dangers that may be
On Christmas-day at sea.



CHRISTMAS AT SEA. BY HARRY FENN.

Fierce winds may whip the glassy ropes;
White mists of spray may cloud the ship;
Yet pleasant smiles and kindly hopes
Circle from lip to lip.
And mirth and song the heart arouse,
While far along the good ship's bows
Dip to the jolly melody
Of Christmas-day at sea.

Fo'castle walls grow warm and bright;
Dear, loving faces come and go;
Sweet children prattle in delight—
In Jack's brief watch below!
And whistling winds may wander by,
And waves may fret the speckled sky:
The merry sailor, what cares he,
On Christmas-day at sea?

"Peace and good-will" for evermore
Reécho all the earth around!
Ring, joyful bells, from shore to shore;
There's love within your silvery sound!
Remembering Whose dear, gentle feet
Once walked the wave, though storms may beat,
We know He looketh lovingly
On Christmas-day at sea!

GEORGE COOPER.

LADY SWEETAPPLE; OR, THREE TO ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE."

CHAPTER X.—HOW THEY ARRIVED AT HIGH BEECH.

BUT now we are approaching High Beech, and must look about us to see what the country is like. The road from the station was hilly—all ups and downs, like life, as Mr. Beeswing said. It was just the sort of road along which a rolling stone on one of those pitches might break a horse's knees, and turn in a second two hundred guineas into fifty pounds. It was poor soil, sandy and gravelly; and though it was much of it reclaimed for agricultural purposes, the heath that crept out everywhere along the banks only showed that a barren nature had been expelled by the plough and London manure, and was only waiting till the enterprising agriculturist, who had sowed a tract of primeval heath with sovereigns, should get tired of the attempt, and be followed by some one less sanguine than himself, to become a barren moor again. But at present there was no such sign. On the contrary, every thing showed that the sovereigns used for seed were forthcoming in abundance; and every one, while admitting the fruitlessness of the attempt to make such farming pay, must admit the prodigality with which Sir Thomas Carlton carried on a perpetual struggle with those unfruitful acres. But in reality this is just the way in which half the waste lands in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, within a certain distance from London, have been reclaimed originally, and are still kept in cultivation. They grow crops, and sometimes very fine ones, especially of roots; but what does it cost to cultivate them? Fortunate it is for agriculturists who bring down their sovereigns from Lombard Street, that they are not bound, like Mr. Alderman Mecchi, to show their books and balance-sheets every year. After all, it is an innocent expense. It does not ruin them, and it provides labor and life to many poor people, who would otherwise come on the rates.

But our present purpose is not to discuss agriculture, but to admire the country in which High Beech was situated. No doubt long ago it had been all one heath, swelling up here and there into those charming hills and knolls which may yet be seen in Surrey and Berkshire, in the region of Bagshot Sand. In old time, the oases of loam and clay, which are found at rare intervals in such soil, had been seized and cultivated as little farms and homesteads. But now all round the park at High Beech the plough had passed over the good and the barren soil alike, and the result, agriculturally speaking, was what we have described.

But inside the park-gates the prospect was very different. It was of great extent, a chase rather than a park, with right of free warren,

vert, and venison, and all the mediæval rights that ever existed. There was a tradition that the red king had stopped to hunt over his manor and forest of High Beech when on his way to his last fatal hunting with Sir Walter Tyrrel in the New Forest. King John had certainly hunted there, and so had Edward IV., for the oak of that merry monarch is still to be seen in High-Beech Park. The great charm of the park was its varied nature. Here there were great swelling hill-sides, some purple with heather in July, others green with brackens in spring. There, hillocks golden with gorse where the sand gave way to loam; and down in the hollows, and even on the hills, great oaks stood, deep-rooted in the clay which lay here and there in pockets. Nor had the Carltons in recent times neglected the chase. On the sand and gravel were planted deodars, and Wellingtonias, and araucarias, and other conifers among the Scotch firs, which seem to have grown there in clumps from everlasting. By the height and girth of the strangers, one could see that, as soon as a new variety was established, it had been planted in High-Beech Park and so, while every one else was wondering whether the Nobilis, or the Insignis, or the Douglas, would thrive in English soil, it had already been years growing at High Beech, and the Carltons had the start of the country.

Such, in a few words, was the park to which the party in the break were now rapidly approaching. After undulating up and down rather more suddenly than usual, the carriage turned to the left, through iron gates, at the side of which stood a comfortable but not very picturesque lodge, out of the window of which beamed the rosy face of a middle-aged woman, whose daughter ran out to open the gates.

Once through the gates, the carriage passed up the shoulder of a longer hill than usual, the brow of which was studded with gigantic Scotch firs. Then the road dived down into a hollow, through an array of old forest-oaks. Across a brook at the bottom, it again climbed a hill, not quite so long as the last; and, on reaching the top, the house at High Beech was to be seen crowning another eminence, between which and the carriage was a gentle descent and a corresponding rise.

"The house at last!" said Lady Sweetapple, who had never been at High Beech before. "Mr. Fortescue, in what style of architecture is the house built?"

Now, Harry Fortescue was not skilled in architecture. It was not often that he was asked any thing that he could not answer, but on this occasion he had not a word to say. Perhaps he was still thinking of Lady Sweetapple's eyes, and comparing them with those of Florry Carlton.

"I am sure I can't tell," he mumbled out at last. "Edward, why do you not answer Lady Sweetapple? You know much more of architecture than I can pretend to. All I know about it is, that it is an old and not a new house."

Now, most of you are of course aware that, when a lady puts a question, it is not the same thing to her by any means if it is answered by the wrong person. What is the use of putting a question at all, if the person to whom it is addressed refuses to answer it? Can he be allowed to pass the question on to the next person, like a misdirected letter? By no means. So, at least, thought Lady Sweetapple, who seemed to consider Edward Vernon by no means a sufficient substitute for Harry Fortescue.

"O Mr. Fortescue, if you don't choose to answer me, pray don't pass me on to any one else. I only cared to know what the architecture was in your opinion."

What Harry Fortescue might have answered—whether he would boldly have answered Renaissance, or Etruscan, or Doric; or whether Edward Vernon, like a good fellow, would have come to his rescue—must remain untold, for the best reason in the world—that we have no means of saying.

By this time the horses had trotted up the last hill, and were within the palings which parted the park from the pleasure-ground round the house. In a minute more they were crushing the gravel of the drive under their hoofs, and, in less time than it takes to write the words, the break and its freight stood before the steps that led up to the hall.

"Here we are at last," said Mr. Beeswing to Count Pantouffles, who was on the side nearest the steps. "Jump out and hand Lady Sweetapple down."

Now, what Lady Sweetapple would have liked best would have

been, that Harry Fortescue should have helped her out. But in this world we cannot always have what we wish; and so, as the count obeyed Mr. Beeswing's command like an automaton, she had to bow to the decrees of Fate. As soon as Lady Sweetapple was safely landed, all the rest followed, and now we see the whole party, *minus* Colonel and Mrs. Barker and the unhappy Marjorams, passing up the steps. By this time Harry Fortescue, who had recovered his senses, had just beaten the footman in a race up to the bell, which he pulled with a will, which soon brought Mr. Podager, the butler, to the hall-door, who now marshalled all the visitors in the hall.

"My lady is in the drawing-room," said Mr. Podager, with a husky voice, preparing to show the way thither.

There were not, fortunately, many cloaks and wraps to get rid of, though it was the month of June; and so in a minute or two Lady Sweetapple and her satellites stood in the blue drawing-room. There they found Lady Carlton and her daughters, and a general welcome, and not a little bowing and scraping on the part of the count, followed.

After Lady Carlton had asked particularly after "dear" Lady Sweetapple and the state of her health, and had duly thanked Count Pantouffles for sparing so much of his valuable time as to run down to High Beech, she reflected for a moment, and then asked: "But where are the Marjorams, and where are Colonel and Mrs. Barker? Did they not come in the same train?"

"If you mean a dear old couple, the husband a military-looking man," said Mr. Beeswing, "they are coming, and can't be very far behind. We left them the brougham to themselves. But as for the Marjorams, we know nothing about them."

"Oh, yes, we do," said the unearnest Harry Fortescue. "I am sure the Marjorams were the unhappy pair that were late for the train. The wife was a severe-looking woman, with an aquiline nose and very thin lips, and the husband, though he might be a very presentable person if you saw him alone, was at that moment so crushed by his wife, that you might almost have put him into Lady Sweetapple's handbag."

"I am so glad the Barkers will be here soon. But how stupid of the Marjorams to lose the train!"

Then ringing the bell to recall the tardy Podager—"Podager," she said, when that worthy appeared, puffing and snorting, "when the brougham comes with Colonel and Mrs. Barker, it must go back to the station to wait for Mr. and Mrs. Marjoram, who are sure to come by the next train." Then she added, "If they are lucky, they will just be here by half-past seven, in time to dress for dinner."

By this time Lady Sweetapple had kissed each of the young ladies on the cheek with an appearance of the greatest cordiality, and they were just vanishing with her to show her her room.

"You know where to go, dears," said Lady Carlton. "Lady Sweetapple is to be in the Butterfly-room, and her maid close by, in the chintz dressing-room."

"Oh, yes, mamma, we know all about it. Palmer settled it and told us all about it this morning;" and then the two ran off up-stairs with Lady Sweetapple, and the rest were left behind with Lady Carlton.

"I hope you like the country, Count Pantouffles," said Lady Carlton, more for the sake of saying something suited to his comprehension than for any other reason.

"Oh, yes," said the count, "I do like the country when it is not too far from town. Then I don't like it at all."

"In fact," said Mr. Beeswing, "the count is so fond of London, that he would like to spread it all over the country. By that means we Londoners should have more fresh air, and yet never grow so rusty as dwellers in the country often become."

"Very true, my dear Beeswing," said the count. "Just what I wanted to say, only I could not say it."

At this moment, greatly to Lady Carlton's relief, Sir Thomas came in from his farm by the garden-door, and the wheels of the brougham were heard crunching over the gravel with Colonel and Mrs. Barker.

After welcoming the guests who had already arrived, Sir Thomas said:

"I really must go and receive Mrs. Barker in person. She is a perfect model wife, and I only hope both your wives"—turning to Harry and Edward—"will be equally affectionate when they are her age.—I say nothing of you, Beeswing, because I look upon you as incorrigible. In fact, I begin to fear you will never marry; but, if

ever you do marry, be sure you take to yourself as perfect a woman as Mrs. Barker."

"Perhaps I would," said Mr. Beeswing, "only I am afraid I might fall into the clutches of a Mrs. Marjoram."

"Hush, hush! no scandal," said Sir Thomas, as he vanished through the door to meet Mrs. Barker.

In a moment or so he reappeared, leading in that lady, who was closely followed by the colonel.

"Dear Mrs. Barker," said Lady Carlton, "how are you? I hope you have had a pleasant journey down, and that you did not feel dull in the brougham."

"Pleasant?" said Mrs. Barker; "of course it was pleasant down. Colonel Barker and I had no one in the carriage with us in the train, and all the way from the station we were alone in the brougham. I really think we were as happy as we could be—were we not, Colonel Barker?"

"My dear," said the devoted Barker, "I should think every one knew by this time that you and I are never happier than when we are alone together."

"How would you like," said Harry Fortescue, "to live twenty years with Mrs. Barker in a desert island all alone?"

"I should like it above all things," said Mrs. Barker, taking the words out of her husband's mouth; "and, what is more, I am quite sure Colonel Barker would like it just as much as myself."

"Then you ought to claim the Dunmow flitch," said the incorrigible Harry, returning to the charge, in spite of the look of the colonel, who grew red about the gills when he felt himself chaffed. But here the genial Beeswing came to the rescue.

"I can tell you why the colonel has not claimed the flitch, Harry. He is leaving it for you, and, from what I hear and see, I am not so sure that you may not be in a condition to claim it before long. But then, you know, it is not enough to be married to be able to claim the flitch; you must have lived for a year and a day with your wife without ever once losing your temper. Now, do you think, when the time comes, you will be able to stand the test?"

"What is all this?" said Lady Carlton. "Are you really going to be married, Mr. Fortescue?—Or is it all a joke, Mr. Beeswing?" Then, as Harry would not answer, "Do tell me, Mr. Beeswing. You know I take so much interest in Harry."

"How can I tell," said Mr. Beeswing, "when he refuses to answer himself? All I can say is, I hear him given away every day to this girl or that, and so I suppose he will some day marry some of them. But I spoke on no better authority than that by common consent of all the town, that Harry Fortescue will soon marry some one."

"Oh, if you have no better authority than all the world," said Lady Carlton, "my mind is quite easy; but I own I should not like to hear that Mr. Fortescue was going to be married seriously from any one else than himself."

This Lady Carlton said in a half-earnest way, which was not without its effect on Harry. Then, changing the subject, she said:

"Sir Thomas, will you let Podager show these gentlemen their rooms? After that we will have some tea, and pray that the Marjorams may come in time for dinner."

"Amen," said Mr. Beeswing; "and after that prayer I hope we shall not think it necessary to wait for them."

So Lady Carlton carried off Mrs. Barker to show her her room, Podager showed the gentlemen theirs, and then Harry Fortescue proposed to Edward Vernon to go out on the terrace and have a walk.

"May I not come too?" said Count Pantouffles.

"We will all go," said Colonel Barker, "at least, all that smoke;" and in two minutes the four were puffing away on the terrace.

This move left Sir Thomas and Mr. Beeswing alone together, for they belong to the generation which does not smoke.

"Any news in town?" asked Sir Thomas. "I have been doing nothing down here these last few days, and there might be a revolution, for all that I know of it."

"Nothing at all. They tell us we are in a period of profound peace, and that the political horizon has not been so clear for years as it now is."

"I hope it may last, with all my heart," said Sir Thomas. "So the ill-feeling and heart-burnings between France and Prussia have quite died out?"

"Quite," said Mr. Beeswing; "at least, that's what all the old fogies say at the clubs, and you know they are always right—at least in their own conceit."

"I wonder which would win," said Sir Thomas, "if it really came to a fight?"

"There again, according to the same venerable authorities, some of whom are even to be found at the Horse Guards, there can be no manner of doubt. Old General Blazer, who was deputy quartermaster-general in the Peninsula, and whose last public service was to recommend Lord Raglan in the Crimea not to march into Sebastopol after the battle of the Alma—he declares that the French would thrash the Prussians into cocked hats, whatever that may be; and he offered to stake his professional reputation that the Emperor Napoleon would be at Berlin in three weeks after the declaration of war."

"How fortunate it is," said Sir Thomas, "that this is all matter of mere speculation, as the political horizon is so clear! A war between France and Prussia might be very inconvenient for England, and it couldn't last long without our being drawn into it."

"Well, you know," said the philosophic Beeswing, "there must be wars sometimes, if it were only to keep down the surplus population of countries that have no emigration. They are a necessary evil; and, besides, if there were no wars, we should never know the true blessings of peace."

"Those are questions," said Sir Thomas, "which I scarcely care to go into. We people in business are content to take all the peace we can get, and the history of the world shows that, in the long-run, we are not likely to be blessed with too much of it."

While the smokers were smoking, saying very little, and Sir Thomas and Mr. Beeswing had so satisfactorily settled the peace of Europe, after the fashion of the old fogies, Florence and Alice Carlton had long since left Lady Sweetapple alone in the Butterfly-room, and had betaken themselves to their dear old school-room.

As soon as the door was shut, Florry asked Alice:

"How do you think she looks?"

"I think, dear, he looks very well indeed."

"He!" cried out Florry. "I said 'she,' and you answer 'he.' Which 'he' are you thinking of?"

"Oh," said Alice, with a blush, "you know, Florry, I was thinking of Harry Fortescue. Don't you think he looked very well?"

"Of course I do," said Florry; "he always looks well when he doesn't wear himself down dancing all night at balls to which we are not invited. But I said 'she,' dear; and you know I did not mean Mrs. Barker."

"Oh," said Alice, with another blush, and a smile of satisfaction in having deceived her sister; for to tell the truth it was not Harry Fortescue that she had been thinking of, but Edward Vernon, and her head and heart were so full of him that she could think of no one else just at that minute—"oh," said Alice, "that is quite another question. But I must say I think she looks remarkably well. A little older, of course, than she did a year ago, and perhaps not quite so fresh; but you know last season she was in mourning, and that tones and fines people down wonderfully."

"Did you think she looked a good deal—I should call it staring—at Harry? It seemed to me she never took her eyes off him, even in those few minutes."

"Well, dear, to tell the truth, I did not see whether she stared at Harry or not. I was looking another way."

After this there was a little pause, and Alice, in her passive way, relapsed into her bad habit of thinking of Edward Vernon. In a little while Florry returned to the attack. She was a girl who thought out loud, if it is allowable to use the phrase. It gave her no happiness to look inward.

"Alice, dear."

"Well, dear, I'm listening."

"What is the use of widows? Why are they allowed to exist?"

"I'm sure I can't tell. I suppose, though, they must exist, like every thing else."

"I don't agree with you at all," said Florry. "They ought always to die with their husbands, or not be permitted to marry again, as is the custom among the Jews, I am told, or be shut up in a college, and never allowed to show their faces in society."

"Why not burn them at once, as they used to do in India?" asked Alice.

"Why not, indeed?" said Florry, waxing warm at the thought. "Of course there ought to be suicides in Europe as well as in India. There, no right-minded woman ever survives her husband; and so it ought to be here. As it is, they marry, and then their husbands die, or they kill them, which comes to much the same thing; and then, having had their chance—the one chance which properly belongs to them—they come with all their cunning and deceitfulness into society, and carry off the young men that girls ought to have. I think it very unfair, and it ought to be stopped by Parliament. The first of women's rights should be, 'No widow has any right to marry again.'"

"How very unkind to widows!" said Alice, "and all because—Before she could finish her sentence, Florry had finished it for her.

"Yes, all because of this odious Lady Sweetapple. You are quite right. She it is that has opened my eyes to the wickedness of widows."

As she said this, Florry Carlton opened her eyes so wide, that if Lady Sweetapple had been near they must have eaten her up.

"Well, dear, don't get into such a way, or you'll be crying again as you were the other day, and Palmer will be asking questions again, and putting two and two together in her wise head. How do you know that Lady Sweetapple is such a wicked widow as you describe her?"

"Just like you!" said Florry. "You never see any thing till you are told it."

"But what was there to see?" asked Alice, who, for the very good reason given above, had not even seen the little that there had been to see.

"Did I not see her staring at Harry and devouring him—yes, literally devouring him—with her eyes? and don't I know what that means? Besides, she is always dancing with him, and that I won't forgive. Mary Challoner wrote me all about their doings at Lady Pennyroyal's ball last week, and in a postscript Marry added that a friend of hers had seen them last Wednesday, side by side, in the stalls seeing *M. P.*"

"Mary Challoner is a great gossip. One never can believe half of what she says she has seen herself, and as for what her friends see and tell her, she must have at least a thousand friends, and they must each tell one dreadful story at least every day. As for Lady Pennyroyal's ball, so long as the strict laws which you propose to pass with regard to widows are not in force, I suppose we must let widows dance with young men, always provided the young men like it."

"That's just what I complain of, and what is really so dangerous," said Florry. "I have told you ever so often, and tried to din it into your silly little head, we—you and I, I mean, and all girls—don't meet widows on equal terms. It's something like one of Colonel Barker's stories about old soldiers and raw recruits. We are like raw recruits; we are ready enough to do what is right and proper, only we don't know how, and just as some nice young man, quite unexceptional in every respect, is beginning to like us, and we are thinking whether we shall ever like him, down comes this widow, or any widow—for I don't like to be personal, it's so vulgar—and swoops off with our nice young man before our very eyes, and we are helpless. That's what I am afraid may happen to Harry Fortescue, and I don't like it. How would you like it with Edward Vernon?"

"O Florry!" said Alice, "I declare I never thought of such a thing. What is it to me if any one snaps up Edward Vernon?"

"I don't believe you, dear," said Florry. "I'm not such a fool as I look, and I believe if there were the least danger of Lady Sweetapple's carrying Edward away from you, you would be in a worse state of mind than I am."

"I know he dances with her sometimes, for he has told me so," said Alice.

"I dare say; but she doesn't look at him in that way. If she did, you would be the first to cry out."

"Well, well, dear, we shall see if your fears are real. Very lucky that you have not had a good fit of crying, for there is the gong for tea, and we must go down. If your eyes had been red, every one, including Lady Sweetapple, must have looked at you, and then she might have guessed that there might be something between you and Harry."

"Now mind, you, goose," said Florry—"you utterly inexperienced, soft-hearted thing. I never said there was any thing between

me and Harry. All I said was, that it was very hard that widows should rush in and carry off nice young men, who might otherwise have been legitimate objects of affection to young ladies. Such conduct is enough, as papa says of the Red Republicans, to sap all the foundations of society, and to reduce the world to a state of political ruin."

"Never fear, darling; I will not mistake your feelings or your intentions; but, for all that, I don't think you would be so severe on Lady Sweetapple, if you did not care just one little bit for Harry Fortune."

"And now let us go down," said Florry; "we have been up here quite long enough."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"GOOD-BYE, SWEETHEART!"

A TALE IN THREE PARTS.—PART SECOND.

BY RHODA BROUGHTON, AUTHOR OF "RED AS A ROSE IS SHE," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.—WHAT JEMIMA SAYS.

"A CHILD might play with me to-night, I feel so bland," says Lenore. "Tommy, Bobby, now is your time; never, probably, will you find Aunty Lenore in such a frame of mind again; drive her hair-pins into her skull, throttle her with your fat arms, ride rough-shod over her prostrate body; she will not utter a groan!"

It is the day following Silvia's dinner-party. Lenore is sitting on the white hearth-rug of our sister's boudoir, an *immoral-looking* little up-stairs room. Looped rose curtains; lazily low chairs; mirrors gleaming through festooned white muslin; flowers that give out their scent delicately yet heavily to the warmed air; and outside the storm-rain scouring the pane, and the wind shaking the shutters with its strong, rude hands. "Had ever any one better cause to be happy than I?" says the girl, while her eyes dance in the firelight. "I am nineteen, I am handsome, I am going to a ball, and shall dance all night, and eat ices, and sit in corners with the dearest fellow in all the world, who is extremely pleased with me."

"Instinct tells me that he dances like a pair of tongs," reply I, amiably.

Lenore reddens.

"Poor Jemima!" she says, with a sort of resentful pity. "No wonder you say spiteful things! You are twenty-nine; you are *first* with nobody! how can you bear to go on living? what can you have to think about all day and all night?"

"Think about!" repeat I, cynically. "Oh! I do not know. Sometimes my litter end, and sometimes my dinner."

"Poor old Jemima!"

"It is a mercy," continue I, reflectively, "that one's *palate* out-lives one's *heart*; one can still relish red mullet when one has lost all appetite for moonshine."

"Bravo, Miss Herrick," cries a voice, as Scrope emerges from behind the *portière*, which hides a little inner room, and lounges with something of his old sleepy manner to the fire. We both start.

"Who gave you leave to come here?" asks Lenore, sharply. "Why did not you cough, or sneeze, or sigh, to let us know you were there, instead of meanly listening to all we had to say?"

"Neither of you said any thing either confidential, or that demanded contradiction," replies the young man, leaning his back against the chimney-piece, and looking down with *insouciant* defiance on the girl at his feet. "You, Miss Lenore, modestly observed that you were nineteen and very handsome, while Miss Jemima remarked that red mullet were better than moonshine, and that Le Mesurier danced like a pair of tongs; in both cases I have the good fortune to agree with her."

"You have, have you?"

"You are wasting all the life out of that bit of *deutzia* in your dress," says the young man, indicating with a slight motion of the hand the white flower that, resting on Lenore's breast, contrasts the dark folds of her serge gown; "suppose you give it me?"

"Suppose I do not!"

"You will really, won't you?" (stooping forward a little, and stretching out his hand to receive the demanded gift).

"Most certainly not!"

"All right!" (resuming his former position, and speaking with languid indifference); "it is a half-withered little vegetable, and I am not sure that I would take it now if you offered it me; but all the same, I have a conviction that before the evening is over it will be mine."

"You have, have you?" cries Lenore, with flashing eyes; "sooner than that you should ever have it—look here!"

She runs to the window, unbolts the shutters, and opening the casement throws the flower out into the wild sleet. Thrice the winter's cold gust drives it back against her, but the third time it disappears. Then she shuts the window, and returns to the fire.

"What a fine thing it is to have a spirit!" says Scrope, walking to the door. He does not look particularly vexed, but his cheek is flushed.

When he is gone, I retire behind the *portière* to write letters; Lenore maintains her former position, thinking, smiling to herself, and curling the pug's light-fawn tail round her fingers. In about ten minutes the door reopens, and Mr. Scrope again enters. His boots are miry, his shooting-coat is drenched, large rain-drops shine and glisten on his bare gold curls, but in his hand he holds the bit of *deutzia*, muddied, stained, dispetalled almost past recognition, but still the identical spray that floated out on the storm-blast through the opened window.

"My presents seldom deceive me," says the young man, advancing to the fire, speaking with his old drawl, and wiping the lockless flower with his pocket-handkerchief; "feel how wet I am" (extending his coat-sleeve).

Silence.

"I am sorry I was so long," continues he, spreading his hands to the blaze; "but it was ill work grubbing among the dark, wet garden-borders; the rain put out my eyes, and hissed in my ears; but, don't you know, one hates to be beaten?"

I peep at them through the *portière*. Lenore has sprung to her feet, and stands facing him. "Give it me back!" she cries, imperiously.

"Most certainly not, as you tersely observed just now."

"Give it me *this instant!*" with a stamp, advancing a step nearer, and trying to snatch it out of his hand.

"*Au contraire*" (holding it high above her head). "I mean to dry it in silver paper, and inscribe upon it, 'Souvenir from Miss Lenore!'"

"I will give you any other instead of it," says Lenore, dropping her Xantippe tone, and growing conciliatory. "I will even fix it in your coat to-night. There!"

"Thanks. I have contracted a particular *penchant* for this one."

She does not repeat her entreaties, but I see her face working.

"Why are you so anxious to have it back?" asks Scrope, tormentingly, standing close to her on the hearth-rug; "don't snatch—it is unladylike—it is wet, it is limp, it is deader than a door-nail."

"Paul gave it me!" cries the girl, bursting into a storm of tears, "You know he did; and he will be so angry when he sees you with it."

He tosses it contemptuously to her: "Take it! I would not have it as a gift. You told me once that you never cried, and this is the *second* time in two days that I have seen you in tears."

They have forgotten all about me. He is leaning his elbow on the mantel-shelf, and staring morosely at her, as she wipes her eyes.

"The *second* time!" (looking up at him with the tears still sparkling on her lashes). "What do you mean?"

"Do you think I did not see your red eyes at luncheon, yesterday?" asks Scrope, scornfully. "You sat with your back to the light, and laughed more than usual, but you did not deceive me."

She turns half away, looking put out at the accusation, which she is unable to rebut.

"What had you been quarrelling about?" asks the young man, eagerly; "as usual, about *me!*"

"You are right," she answers, turning her great angry gray eyes upon him; "it was about you; it is *always* about you; if it were not for you, we should never have a word! Why do you insist on *thrusting* yourself between him and me? Why do you not go away? There are a dozen other places where, I dare say, you would be welcome. Why cannot you leave this one, where you *must* see that you are in the way?"

"May I ask how?" His voice is cold, but it is the cold of strangled emotion.

"Did not I tell you a hundred times, at Dinan, what a bore and a nuisance I thought you?" asks the girl, half in bitter jest, half in earnest. "Why do you make me say these rude things to you over again?"

He looks at her steadfastly. "You mean them now; you did not mean them then."

"Did not I?" (indignantly); "ask Jemima."

"Lenore" (his lips growing white), "you said 'go,' but, as I stand here, I swear your eyes said 'stay.'"

"They did not!" she cries, passionately; "they *never* did; if they had—if they ever had been so unfaithful to him, I would have torn them out!"

"Did you think me a bore and a nuisance when I lay at your feet those summer mornings under the chestnuts on Mont Parnasse, and read 'Manfred' to you?"

"That I did," she answers, with vicious emphasis. "Why I slept half the time, and dislocated my jaw with yawning the other half! Not one man in a hundred can read poetry, and you" (bursting out into angry laughter)—"you rolled your R's, and ranted with the best of them."

Mr. Scrope turns sharply away, to hide his bitter mortification.

"Why do not you go?" continues Lenore, with her startling candor; "it cannot be very amusing to you being here now; the partridges are so wild that you cannot get near them, and Sylvia never has any pheasants—go! go!"

Again he turns and faces her. "Are you serious?" he says, while all his boyish face twitches. "I know you never stick at saying any thing that will hurt your fellow-creatures' feelings, but do you really mean that you wish me to leave this house?"

"I do, distinctly."

"That the sight of me takes away your appetite, or *his*, which is it?"

"Both."

"Miss Lenore" (dropping his sneering tone, and trying to take her hand), "I have been impertinent to you. I own it. I had no right to sneer at him behind his back—it was mean and womanish of me; but—but—you were a little friendly to me at Dinan, and it is hard to be shamed all in a minute."

"At Dinan you were never any thing more than a *pis aller*."

"If I promise never to address you unless you first speak to me," says the young fellow, entreatingly; "not to look at you more than I can help; to be no more to you than the footman who hands you soup, will you let me stay then?"

"Fiddlesticks!" replies she, with plain common-sense; "nobody can *afface* himself in the way you describe; staying in the house with a person, one must be brought into constant contact with him. I say again—I say it *three times*—go! go! GO!"

"I will go, then," answers Scrope, steadying his voice with a great effort, and speaking with cold quiet; "but I will not go unpaid. Yes; I will go, but on one only condition."

"What is it?"

"That you dance with me to-night—not a beggarly *one*, as you might with Webster, or any other bowing acquaintance, but *three—four times*."

"I will do nothing of the kind; I will have no bargaining with you," replies Lenore, with dignity.

"Then I will stay!" cries Scrope, with angry excitement. "Miss Lenore, it is not your house; you cannot have me turned out-of-doors, much as you would wish it. Eyesore as I am to you, I will stay!"

"Do!" she says, with a contemptuous sneer; "it will be a gentlemanlike act, of a piece with the rest of your conduct."

"That was a nasty one," think I, from behind the *portière*.)

There is a moment's silence.

"Say no more bitter things," says Scrope, in a changed, rough voice; "if you tried from now till the Judgment-day, you never could beat that last; and the worst of it is that it was true—it was ungentlemanlike; but, when one has gone mad, one is not particular about one's manners, as perhaps you will discover some fine day."

Lenore is silent.

"Make your mind easy, I will go—to-night, if you wish."

"There is no such wonderful hurry; to-morrow will do perfectly."

"To-morrow, then."

"Thanks."

"Lenore" (speaking with cutting emphasis), "you are the handsomest woman in the world, and the one who has the knack of saying the nastiest things. If your face drives men mad, your tongue brings them back to sanity pretty quickly. Other women's sharp speeches pour off one like water; yours bite and sting."

"Perhaps" (indifferently).

A little stillness.

Again I peep. Scrope has sat down by the table; his elbows rest on the Utrecht-velvet cover, among all Sylvia's silly little knick-knacks; his hands shade his face.

"Don't look so tragic," says my sister, in a mollified voice, sidling up to him. "I own that I thought of myself *first*; I always do; it is my way; but, if you could have sense to perceive it, you would see that it is quite as much for your interest as mine that you should go. My dear boy" (laying her hand on his coat-sleeve), "I have a horrible suspicion that you are *crying*! Please disabuse me of it."

"Nothing is further from my thoughts," says Scrope, lifting his head and showing his beautiful face, undisfigured, indeed, by tears, but paled and altered by anger and pain. "Good God!" (looking at her fiercely) "a man *would* be a fool to cry about you. Would you ever cease laughing and jeering at him?"

"Stop raving at me!" cries Lenore, whose patience is fast oozing out. "I have done nothing; you have been a fool, and you must pay for it. Perhaps" (speaking very slowly, as if the words were not sweet to her lips), "I wish to be quite fair—perhaps—at Dinan—I *helped* you to be so—a little."

He does not speak.

"Charlie! look here" (speaking with a soothing, sisterly tone), "you know, and I know, and Jemima knows, and I am afraid Paul knows, that sixty times a day you are on the verge of making a fool of yourself. Is not it better that you should go, before you tumble over the verge?"

"All right," answers he, impatiently, shaking off her hand; "I am going. Having gained that point, I think the least you might do is to leave me alone."

"But—but you will come to the ball to-night?"

"No" (very curly).

"You *must*; it will look so odd!"

"Odd it *may* look, then. At the present moment" (laughing disagreeably), "my whole life looks oddly enough, I can tell you."

"But supposing I give you *one* dance, a quadrille?" (unable, womanlike, to let well alone, and kneeling down on the floor beside him).

"I would not walk through a quadrille with you" (speaking very loftily), "if you were to go down on your knees to me."

"As I am doing at the present moment," replies Lenore, laughing. "A waltz, then?"

"Are you serious? Do you mean it?" (catching hold of her two-hands, while his eyes light up) "or are you only making a fool of me, as you have been doing without intermission for the last six months?"

"One never knows what may happen," replies the girl, oracularly, already rather repenting her concession; "perhaps—the fag-end—the very fag-end of a galop, if you will not expect to take me into tea afterward."

"Do not!" cry I, dropping my pen, and hurrying from my lurking-place. "Lenore, for the first time in your life, take advice! Let this poor boy go to-night!"

As I had surmised, they had forgotten my existence. Both look at me with the partial fondness with which it is usually an interloper's fate to be regarded.

"Meddlesome Matty!" cries my sister, with her usual amenity, "who asked your opinion?"

"Miss Jemima," says Scrope, reproachfully, "I thought you were my friend."

"So I am," I say, smiling and turning to him. "If she dances with you once, twice, a dozen times, to-night, how much the better will you be to-morrow? You will have set us all by the ears, whilst you—" I pause.

Neither speaks.

"It is useless disguising from ourselves," continue I, with my usual excellent common-sense, "that Paul will be displeased."

"Let him be displeased, then, if he can be so irrational!" cries Lenore, cheeks on fire, and eyes burning. "But no! what am I talking about? Paul has perfect confidence in me; if I were to dance all night with Charlie Scrope, or Charlie anybody else, he would not mind—he would understand."

"Time will show," reply I, mystically, walking to the door.

"I will give you *four* dances, four *round* ones—there!" says Lenore, with a brilliant smile, and a triumphant glance at me as I leave the room. "Vogue la galère!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MR. BIXBY'S CHRISTMAS VISITOR.

At the head of the first flight of stairs, and on opposite sides of the landing, were the respective rooms of Mr. Bixby and Mr. Bangs. The house in which they lived stood in a quiet and retired street on the lower and western side of New York, a locality which was once inhabited by fashionable families, afterward by old-fashioned families, and at the time of our story by the keepers of boarding-houses for single men.

Mr. Henry Bixby and Mr. Alfred Bangs were single men—Mr. Bangs, the wine-merchant, because he liked wine and song so well that he never had leisure to think of women, because he was fat, because he was red in the face, and, if more reasons are necessary, because his fingers were chubby and short. For twenty years, day by day, Mr. Bangs had been absorbed in business. For twenty years, night after night, it had been his custom to entertain his friends at his apartment in not a very quiet way. He was so happy, and bountiful, and jolly, that he had never thought of marriage. Yet he might easily have been mistaken by the casual observer for a family man. He wore a white vest when it wasn't too cold; his linen was painfully plain. There was not a sign of jewelry about him. He wore low shoes, which he tied with a ribbon. This was Mr. Bangs.

Not quite so old in years as the opposite lodger was Mr. Bixby, known to his few friends as a genial philosopher and poet, to the public as the literary critic of one of the great daily papers. He might have been thirty-five years of age, but, as he had lived more for others than for himself, as he had made a study and not a pleasure of life, his gray eyes and the other features of his face suggested to whoever met him a longer past. There was something about him that caused men to wonder, not what he was, but what he had been.

For ten years Mr. Bangs and Mr. Bixby had been inmates of the house together. Mr. Bangs had been there longer. The present landlady had received as a legacy from her predecessor, who did not care to take him away, Mr. Bangs. As she said, she made a present of Bangs.

Long as they had known each other, the two lodgers were only acquaintances. Sometimes, on a Sunday afternoon, they would walk out in company, stroll down to the Battery, and there smoke their cigars and watch the ships, but beyond this point of sociability, which neither enjoyed, there was nothing more. Never had Bixby read Bangs any poem he had made, nor did ever Bangs invite Bixby to meet his convivial friends of an evening to play whist or to partake of his mulled ale. In fact, Mr. Bixby had been often and with great enthusiasm voted an unsocial fellow by the cronies of Mr. Bangs, but he rose somewhat in their estimation when they were informed that he had consented to exchange rooms with their host.

"He isn't such a grouty fellow, after all," said Bangs. "I told him that we were too near the street, and that some one had been complaining to the landlady of our singing. He didn't even stop to think, but agreed to do it at once. He thought the light would be better here. Now, fellows, I call that doing the fair thing."

And the speech of Mr. Bangs was applauded.

It was the morning of the day before Christmas that the change was effected. In the closet where had been the bottles, the decanters, glasses, and pickle-jars of the late occupant, Mr. Bixby had arranged shelves, and filled them with his books. Over the mantel, from which Mr. Bangs had taken away a colored print of a bulldog in an overcoat, Mr. Bixby hung a fine engraving of the Madonna, and on the mantel itself he had placed his clock. It was a small French clock under a crystal, so that its rapidly-swinging pendulum could be easily

seen. All bachelors, however negligent of their surroundings, have some one hobby among articles of furniture. It may be an easy-chair, or a book-case, or a chandelier—there is one thing that must be the best of its kind. There could be no doubt, from the care with which Mr. Bixby placed his clock in its position, and from time to time compared it with his watch, that this was his hobby. It had the three requisites which he demanded in a clock. It kept correct time without failing, its pendulum swung rapidly, and was plainly visible. Time past was the happiness of Mr. Bixby, and this clock told him continually that all was being done that could be done to induce the hours of every day to go over to the majority. He depended upon this clock. He was surer of its mechanism than of that of his own heart.

What with hanging his pictures and arranging his furniture, and with many other little things which had to be done, Mr. Bixby was busily employed all day. But the task was not an unpleasant one. His heart was in the work, for there was hardly an object in the room not nearly associated with some event in his past life. After carefully brushing the dust from an old writing-desk, which had evidently once belonged to a lady, he placed it upon the rug in front of the fire. Only on Christmas-eves was this desk opened.

"It is curious," thought Mr. Bixby, "that I should have moved this day, of all days in the year!"

Often in his work he thought of stopping to take from the desk an old packet of letters, and reading them once more. But it was not yet time, and, moreover, he was continually interrupted. First, there came some one to his door with "Two dozen Congress-water for Mr. Bangs;" then one with "Mr. Bangs's boots," and another to tell Mr. Bangs that "the pup was big enough to take away." Finally, came Bangs himself, to complain of like interruptions, and to bid him good-bye.

"Here is some manuscript a boy left for you. You will have to attend both doors now. I am off to spend Christmas. We are going to have a Tom-and-Jerry party in Jersey. You know—

"The Tom-and-Jerry days have come, the happiest in the year!"

Good rendering, eh? That isn't all:

"I only wish to live till the juleps come again!"

And Mr. Bangs laughed uproariously, even after he had said, "Good-bye," and shut the door behind him.

"What a personification of Bacchus!" thought Mr. Bixby—

"Ever laughing, ever young."

He will be young as long as he lives, but I am afraid that won't be long. If ever there was a man in immediate danger of apoplexy, Bangs is that man."

It was after dinner when Mr. Bixby lighted his drop-light and sat down before the fire. He pushed an ottoman in front of him, on which to rest his feet, which he had comfortably encased in his slippers. But the shadows in his new room did not please him. He could hardly see the clock on the mantel. The Madonna above was completely in the shade. So he lighted the chandelier above and sat down again, hoping that no friend, either of his own or of Mr. Bangs, would interrupt him. The desk was open at his feet. The package of letters lay near him on the table. He placed his hand upon them, but let it rest there. The hour had not quite arrived when he would read them. He fell again into the reveries of the day. He lingered over the thoughts of his better life ere he opened the packet which told of its end. For the last ten years he had labored without ambition, and had been successful. His name was well known as a journalist, and his salary was ample. Before that time he had striven ambitiously, but fruitlessly, patiently, but as in a quicksand, until, on a day, he had none to strive for but himself, and then success had come. Since noon, seven hours and twenty-nine minutes, said the clock before him. His anniversary was near. Mr. Bixby drew the letters near him, and untied the package. Just then there came a knock at his door, and, before he had determined whether or not he should say, "Come in," the door opened, and an elderly gentleman stepped into the apartment. Quietly he came in. There was no sound attending his entrance except the knock. Mr. Bixby, looking up, saw a man of more than ordinary height, with countenance rigid and puritanical in expression, as though the mind which had formed it was one influenced more by justice than mercy. His eyes were concealed by a pair of colored spectacles, but these, as they caught and reflected the light, were brighter and more startling than any eyes

could have been. He was dressed in a long surtout, which he wore closely buttoned, high dickey, and high black-silk stock, which covered his throat to his chin. His iron-gray hair was brushed somewhat pompously backward over his forehead, and his whole effect was that of a gentleman of the generation which wore bell-crowned hats and carried enormous canes with tassels. But what attracted Mr. Bixby's particular attention were the wrinkles of his face. These were in all places where wrinkles should not be. One ran straight through the centre of his forehead, continuing the line of the nose upward to the hair. Two others, starting from the bridge of the nose, ran diagonally down to the nostrils. He was close shaven, and his lips were straight and thin. These peculiarities of his visitor Mr. Bixby had barely time to mark when the gentleman said:

"Ah, Mr. Bangs, I am glad to find you in!"

Mr. Bixby never in his life more desired to be alone, and yet there was something in this old man which so attracted him that he could not correct his mistake. He felt a sudden fascination and desire to

had come, and why he did not open the subject at once, if he was only intending to stop a moment.

"It is very disagreeable weather out," said the man with the pompous forelock, interrupting his reflections.

"Snowing?" asked Bixby.

"No—sleet."

"Very unpleasant to have far to go such a night," suggested Bixby, who could think of nothing better to say.

"Not at all," responded the old gentleman, authoritatively. Bixby was silent again.

The old gentleman, leaning with his elbow on the table, began again.

"You like to live well, Mr. Bangs?"

"I try to," answered Mr. Bixby.

"Yes."

"This must be some relative of Bangs come to deliver him a lecture on his course of life. Why don't he broach his advice at once?"



"It was hard to deceive him, but he will thank me now."

know more of him. Bangs was away and could not be seen. The gentleman could not be very well acquainted with Bangs, very probably never had seen him, or he would not have made such an error. But nothing but the influence which seemed to proceed from his visitor could have induced Mr. Bixby to answer as he did.

"Thank you, sir. Pray, take this chair."

As he said this, he arose and wheeled an easy-chair to the other side of the table.

The elderly gentleman sat down.

"You have a very cheerful apartment here, Mr. Bangs."

"Yes. I always like to be comfortable."

"Of course," said the elderly gentleman.

"Will you remove your overcoat, sir?" asked Mr. Bixby, and immediately repeated it.

"Oh, no, I shall stop but a moment."

There was an interval of silence. A block of coal broke open in the grate and fell apart. A jet of gas burst forth and burned, then sputtered and went out. Mr. Bixby wondered on what business he

thought Mr. Bixby. The visitor here pulled a glove from his right hand, ran his fingers through his hair, and then, in a more business-like tone, spoke again:

"Although a stranger to you personally, Mr. Bangs, I have always taken a great interest in your family. Mr. Bangs, I knew your father."

"Indeed! I never heard him speak—"

"No, I dare say; it was near the end of his life. I was near by, and rendered him some assistance, when he died suddenly of apoplexy. He was not so much of a man as your grandfather."

"Was he not?" asked Mr. Bixby, musingly. He was thinking how old the grandfather of his friend Bangs must have been.

"No," continued the elderly gentleman; "but even his judgment I never considered equal to that of your great-grandfather."

"Here is, indeed, a friend—a friend of the family. Why is Mr. Bangs away?" thought Mr. Bixby, and he bent his head a little, and looked under the drop-light, to get a view of his visitor. He saw only the reflection on his spectacles, and drew back suddenly, for fear of being detected.

"You like a good song, I have heard, Mr. Bangs," came from the other side of the table. "Have you any favorite?"

Mr. Bixby did not understand this at all. The question puzzled him. Should he as Bangs fall in the estimation of some relative if he admitted the fact. Or did his visitor intend to sing? However, he felt compelled to be frank, so he said:

"Oh, yes; I like a good song. Some of the Scotch ballads please me most. There is 'The Land o' the Leal'."

"A very fine song, sir. A very fine song. It is a credit to any man to like that song."

The old gentleman was excited. Mr. Bixby was just congratulating himself on having given Bangs a lift, when his thoughts were turned into an altogether new channel by the following remark:

"It was my impression, however, that your taste ran rather in the way of drinking-songs. I should have thought now you would have said, 'The Coal-black Wine'."

There was something in the tone with which this was uttered that made Mr. Bixby shudder. It ran through his mind that this man was some enemy of Bangs—that he was dangerous. Startled by this sudden suspicion, tremblingly he again peered under the shade. The wrinkle in the line of the frontal suture was more deeply indented. The light on the spectacles was brighter than ever.

"Mr. Bangs, I called on your opposite neighbor, Mr. Bixby, to-night. I knocked on the door, but he was away."

"Yes," said Mr. Bixby, somewhat confused. He wished that Bangs had stayed at home, and determined to end the interview as soon as possible.

"Yes. I am sorry. I had a positive appointment with him. I am a great friend of his."

"Does he know you?"

"Oh, no; we have never met personally that he remembers. I am an old friend of the family. He suffers from the heart-disease, and has been expecting me."

"Oh, you are a physician?"

"Yes, sir. I attended his father at his last illness."

Mr. Bixby's heart began to beat rapidly. His mind became equally active, and, although he had no experience to be guided by, he began to suspect the nature of this man's business with Bangs. He almost determined to discover himself, but the letters were yet unread. If that were only done, he would do any thing his visitor might request. Recalling the old gentleman's last words, he said, at last, calmly:

"And his mother?"

"Yes, and his mother."

The old man's voice assumed almost a kindly tone.

"He is, indeed, a friend of my family," thought Mr. Bixby; and then he started, for fear he might have spoken aloud.

His eyes fell upon the packet of letters. He must read them. He must end the interview. The old doctor must have noticed Mr. Bixby's eyes, with the tears rising in them, as he tenderly touched the letters one by one, for it was with a voice very gentle and low that he spoke again.

"I attended once a very dear friend of his. It must be quite ten years ago now. Her name was Margaret. I think she loved him, for I remember—yes—it was one Christmas-eve, she said, and after that she said no more, 'Has Harry come?'"

Mr. Bixby could bear no more. His sobs were striving for utterance. His fingers grasped the strong oak arms of his chair. It was only the thought of the letters which gave him strength to say:

"I am sorry, sir. You mistake me. I must ask you to leave me. You may come again. I shall be here, but I have something I would do to-night. I have given you much of my time. It is already late."

"It is you who mistake, Mr. Bangs. But I am going now. I said I would stop but a moment. I have kept my promise, as you will see by your clock."

Before his hands fell listless from the arms of the chair—before his lips parted, but not for speech—ay, just before that quick, strong pain in his heart, Mr. Bixby saw on the white dial the black hands yet pointing to the seven hours and the twenty-nine minutes, the pendulum moveless, still, half-way on the upward journey of the arc.

The elderly gentleman arose, walked round the table, and smiled, himself, as he saw a smile of perfected happiness on the face of the

dead, when so lately sorrow itself had been pictured on the face of the living.

"It was hard to deceive him, but he will thank me now," said he of the gray locks and wrinkled visage. "And here are the letters which he does not need."

Had the old man no more appointments to keep? For he took up one of the letters and opened it. A lock of golden hair fell unnoticed to the floor. Then he read silently, and, after a while, aloud:

"I hope you will come and see me on Christmas-eve, for I am not well. I long for you more than I can say. You must be tired with your struggle in the great city, and need rest. O Harry! come and comfort her that loves you, as you well know."

"MARGARET."

The bells of Trinity commenced ringing.

"He was tired, and he needed rest," said Death.

CHARLES S. GAGE.

BACHELOR BLUFF'S HOLIDAYS.

"I HATE holidays," said Bachelor Bluff to me, with some little irritation, on a Christmas a few years ago. Then he paused an instant, after which he resumed: "I don't mean to say that I hate to see people enjoying themselves. But I hate holidays, nevertheless, because to me they are always the dreariest and saddest days of the year. I shudder at the name of holiday. I dread the approach of one, and thank Heaven when it is over. I pass through, on a holiday, the most horrible sensations, the bitterest feelings, the most oppressive melancholy; in fact, I am not myself at holiday-times."

"Very strange," I ventured to interpose.

"A plague on it!" said he, almost with violence. "I'm not inhuman. I don't wish anybody harm. I'm glad people can enjoy themselves. But I hate holidays all the same. You see, this is the reason: I am a bachelor; I am without kin; I am in a land that did not know me at birth. And so, when holidays come around, there is no place anywhere for me. I have friends, of course; I don't think I've been a very sulky, shut-in, reticent fellow; and there is many a board that has a place for me—but not at Christmas-time. At Christmas, the dinner is a family gathering; and I've no family. There is such a gathering of kindred on this occasion, such a reunion of family folk, that there is no place for a friend, even if the friend be liked. Christmas, with all its kindness and charity and good-will, is, after all, deuced selfish. Each little set gathers within its own circle; and people like me, with no particular circle, are left in the lurch. So you see, on the day of all the days in the year that my heart pines for good cheer, I'm without an invitation."

"Oh, it's because I pine for good cheer," said the bachelor, sharply, interrupting my attempt to speak, "that I hate holidays. If I were an infernally selfish fellow, I wouldn't hate holidays. I'd go off and have some fun all to myself, somewhere or somehow. But, you see, I hate to be in the dark when all the rest of the world is in light. I hate holidays, because I ought to be merry and happy on holidays, and can't."

"Don't tell me," he cried, stopping the word that was on my lips; "I tell you, I hate holidays. The shops look merry, do they, with their bright toys and their green branches? The pantomime is crowded with merry hearts, is it? The circus and the show are brimful of fun and laughter, are they? Well, they all make me miserable. I haven't any pretty-faced girls or bright-eyed boys to take to the circus or the show, and all the nice girls and fine boys of my acquaintance have their uncles or their grand-dads or their cousins to take them to those places; so, if I go, I must go alone. But I don't go. I can't bear the chill of seeing everybody happy, and knowing myself so lonely and desolate. Confound it, sir, I've too much heart to be happy under such circumstances! I'm too humane, sir! And the result is, I hate holidays. It's miserable to be out, and yet I can't stay at home, for I get thinking of Christmases past. I can't read—the shadow on my heart makes it impossible. I can't walk—for I see nothing but pretty pictures through the bright windows, and happy groups of pleasure-seekers. The fact is, I've nothing to do but to hate holidays.—But will you not dine with me?"

Of course, I had to plead engagement with my own family circle,

and I couldn't quite invite Mr. Bluff home *that* day, when Cousin Charles and his wife, and Sister Susan and her daughter, and three of my wife's kin, had come in from the country, all to make a merry Christmas with us. I felt sorry, but it was quite impossible; so I wished Mr. Bluff a "merry Christmas," and hurried homeward through the cold and nipping air.

I did not meet Bachelor Bluff again until a week after Christmas of the next year, when I learned some strange particulars of what occurred to him after our parting on the occasion just described. I will let Bachelor Bluff tell his adventures for himself.

"I went to church," said he, "and was as sad there as everywhere else. Of course, the evergreens were pretty, and the music fine; but all around me were happy groups of people, who could scarcely keep down 'merry Christmas' long enough to do reverence to sacred Christmas. And nobody was alone but me. Every happy paterfamilias in his paw tantalized me, and the whole atmosphere of the place seemed so much better suited to every one else than me that I came away hating holidays worse than ever. Then I went to the pantomime, and sat down in a box all alone by myself. Everybody seemed on the best of terms with everybody else, and jokes and banter passed from one to another with the most good-natured freedom. Everybody but me was in a little group of friends. I was the only person in the whole theatre that was alone. And then there was such clapping of hands, and roars of laughter, and shouts of delight at all the fun going on upon the stage, all of which was rendered doubly enjoyable by everybody having somebody with whom to share and interchange the pleasure, that my loneliness got simply unbearable, and I hated holidays infinitely worse than ever.

"By five o'clock the holiday became so intolerable that I said I'd go and get a dinner. The best dinner the town could provide. A sumptuous dinner. A sumptuous dinner for one. A dinner with many courses, with wines of the finest brands, with bright lights, with a cheerful fire, with every condition of comfort—and I'd see if I couldn't for once extract a little pleasure out of a holiday!

"The elegant dining-room of the famous caterer looked bright, but it was empty. Who dined at a restaurant on Christmas but me? There was a flutter of surprise when I ordered a dinner, and the few attendants were, no doubt, glad of something to break the monotony of the hours.

"My dinner was elegantly served. The spacious room looked lonely; but the white, snowy cloths, the rich window-hangings, the warm tints of the walls, the sparkle of the fire in the steel grate, gave the room an air of elegance and cheerfulness; and then the table at which I dined was close to the window, and through the partly-drawn curtains were visible pictures of lonely, cold streets, with bright lights from many a window, it is true, but there was a storm, and snow began whirling through the street. I let my imagination paint the streets as cold and dreary as it would, just to extract a little pleasure by way of contrast from the brilliant room of which I was apparently sole master.

"I dined well, and recalled in fancy old, youthful Christmases, and pledged mentally many an old friend, and my melancholy was mellowing into a low, sad undertone, when, just as I was raising a glass of wine to my lips, I was startled by a picture at the window-pane. It was a pale, wild, haggard face, in a great cloud of black hair, pressed against the glass. As I looked, it vanished. With a strange thrill at my heart, which my lips mocked with a derisive sneer, I finished the wine and set down the glass. It was, of course, only a beggar-girl that had crept up to the window and stole a glance at the bright scene within; but still the pale face troubled me a little, and threw a fresh shadow on my heart. I filled my glass once more with wine, and was again about to drink, when the face reappeared at the window. It was so white, so thin, with eyes so large, wild, and hungry-looking, and the black, unkempt hair, into which the snow had drifted, formed so strange and weird a frame to the picture, that I was fairly startled. Replacing, untasted, the liquor on the table, I rose and went close to the pane. The face had vanished, and I could see no object within many feet of the window. The storm had increased, and the snow was driving in wild gusts through the streets, which were empty, save here and there a hurrying wayfarer. The whole scene was cold, wild, and desolate, and I could not repress a keen thrill of sympathy for the child, whoever it was, whose only Christmas was to watch, in cold and storm, the rich banquet ungratefully enjoyed by the lonely bachelor. I resumed my place at the

table; but the dinner was finished, and the wine had no further relish. I was haunted by the vision at the window, and began, with an unreasonable irritation at the interruption, to repeat with fresh warmth my detestation of holidays. One couldn't even dine alone on a holiday with any sort of comfort, I declared. On holidays one was tormented by too much pleasure on one side, and too much misery on the other. And then, I said, hunting for justification of my dislike of the day, 'How many other people are, like me, made miserable by seeing the fulness of enjoyment others possessed!'

"Oh, yes, I know," sarcastically replied the bachelor to a comment of mine; "of course, all magnanimous, generous, and noble-souled people delight in seeing other people made happy, and are quite content to accept this vicarious felicity. But I, you see, and this dear little girl!"

"Dear little girl!"

"Oh, I forgot," said Bachelor Bluff, blushing a little, in spite of a desperate effort not to do so. "I didn't tell you. Well, it was so absurd! I kept thinking, thinking of the pale, haggard, lonely little girl on the cold and desolate side of the window-pane, and the overfed, discontented, lonely old bachelor on the splendid side of the window-pane; and I didn't get much happier thinking about it, I can assure you. I drank glass after glass of the wine—not that I enjoyed its flavor any more, but mechanically, as it were, and with a sort of hope thereby to drown unpleasant reminders. I tried to attribute my annoyance in the matter to holidays, and so denounced them more vehemently than ever. I got up once in a while and went to the window, but could see no one to whom the pale face could have belonged.

"At last, in no very amiable mood, I got up, put on my wrappers, and went out; and the first thing I did was to run against a small figure crouching in the door-way. A face looked up quickly at the rough encounter, and I saw the pale features of the window-pane. I was very irritated and angry, and spoke harshly; and then, all at once, I am sure I don't know how it happened, but it flashed upon me that I, of all men, had no right to utter a harsh word to one oppressed with so wretched a Christmas as this poor creature was. I couldn't say another word, but began feeling in my pocket for some money, and then I asked a question or two, and then I don't quite know how it came about—isn't it very warm here?" exclaimed Bachelor Bluff, rising and walking about, and wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Well, you see," he resumed, nervously, "it was very absurd, but I did believe the girl's story—the old story, you know, of privation and suffering, and all that—and just thought I'd go home with the brat and see if what she said was all true. And then I remembered that all the shops were closed, and not a purchase could be made; and I went back to the restaurant, and persuaded the proprietor to put up for me a hamper of provisions, which the half-wild little youngster helped me carry through the snow, dancing with delight all the way.—And isn't this enough?"

"Not a bit, Mr. Bluff. We must have the whole story."

"I declare," said Bachelor Bluff, "there's no whole story to tell. A widow with children in great need, that was what I found; and they had a feast that night, and a little change to buy them a loaf and a garment or two the next day; and they were all so bright, and so merry, and so thankful, and so good, that, when I got home that night, I was mightily amazed that, instead of going to bed sour at holidays, I was in a state of great contentment in regard to holidays. In fact, I was really merry. I whistled. I sang. I do believe I cut a caper. The poor wretches I had left had been so merry over their unlooked-for Christmas banquet that their spirits infected mine."

"And then I got thinking again. Of course, holidays had been miserable to me, I said. What right had a well-to-do, lonely old bachelor hovering wistfully in the vicinity of happy circles, when all about there were so many people as lonely as he, and yet oppressed with want. 'Good Gracious!' I exclaimed, 'to think of a man complaining of loneliness with thousands of wretches yearning for his help and comfort, with endless opportunities for work and company, with hundreds of pleasant and delightful things to do! Just to think of it!' It put me in a great fury at myself to think of it. I tried pretty hard to escape from myself, and began inventing excuses and all that sort of thing, but I rigidly forced myself to look squarely at my own conduct. And then I reconciled my conscience by declaring that, if

ever after that day I hated a holiday again, might my holidays end at once and forever!

"Did I go and see my *protégées* again? What a question! Why—well, no matter. If the widow is comfortable now, it is because she has found a way to earn without difficulty enough for her few wants. That's no fault of mine. I would have done more for her, but she wouldn't let me. But just let me tell you about New-Year's—the New-Year's day that followed the Christmas I've been describing. It was lucky for me there was another holiday only a week off. Bless you! I had so much to do that day that I was completely bewildered, and the hours weren't half long enough. I did make a few social calls, but then I hurried them over; and then hastened to my little girl, whose face had already caught a touch of color; and she, looking quite handsome in her new frock and her ribbons, took me to other poor folk, and—well, that's about the whole story.

"Oh, as to the next Christmas. Well, I didn't dine alone, as you may guess. It was up three stairs, that's true, and there was none of that elegance that marked the dinner of the year before; but it was merry, and happy, and bright; it was a generous, honest, hearty, Christmas dinner, that it was, although I do wish the widow hadn't talked so much about the mysterious way a turkey had been left at her door the night before. And Molly—that's the little girl—and I had a robbing appetite. We went to church early; then we had been down to the Five Points to carry the poor outcasts there something for their Christmas dinner; in fact, we had done wonders of work, and Molly was in high spirits, and so the Christmas dinner was a great success.

"Dear me, sir, no! Just as you say. Holidays are not in the least wearisome any more. Plague on it! When a man tells me now that he hates holidays, I find myself getting very wroth. I pin him by the button-hole at once, and tell him my experience. The fact is, if I were at dinner, and anybody should ask me for a sentiment, I should say:

"God bless all holidays!"

O. B. BUNCE.

ALONE IN THE FARM-PORCH.

I CAN'T make out, for the life of me, what ails my eyes to-night! As clear as ever, the hills and fields stand out in the sunset light; But, whether I look this way or that, comes up a different scene, As if another picture had somehow slipped between:

Her father's apple-orchard, and we two loitering there. I shouldn't have stayed a minute; I hadn't one to spare; I'd only just come over to try and borrow a plough; But the sight of her put my hurry right out of my head somehow.

I mind the apple-blossoms, how thick they were that spring! Yes, and I'm likely to mind them as long as any thing. Some of the boughs, I remember, were just a sight to see; The buds were as red as roses, all over the top of the tree.

I held a branch while she stripped it, till, shaken out of place, A bee from one of the broken flowers came flying into her face. She screamed, and I—I kissed her, just for a cure, you know, And she blushed till her cheeks were pinker than the pinkest apple-blown.

And so—and so—we were married before the spring came round again; Under this roof we lived together five happy years, and then— Well, well, she never was wrinkled, like me, and old and gray: I think of her always fresh and fair, just as she looked that day.

But why does it all come back to me so plain to-night? Is she Perhaps remembering too, up there, and calling down to me?

Mark's wife would laugh at that—no matter! for all her city school, It doesn't follow, I take it, that I'm a natural fool.

There's things enough this minute, I guess— There! old man, never mind!

So far as she thinks about it I'm sure she means to be kind; But old ways ain't like young ways, and oughtn't to be, I know; Only, whenever my time is come, I sha'n't be sorry to go.

There's nobody here to miss me, or, leastways, not for long; Mark would, I think, for a little—I mustn't do him wrong. He's held the place-of a son to me in all these years that are gone; But blood is thicker than water; of course, a man must look to his own.

Yes, Sister Sue and her boy have made the only home I had. I promised her, dying, the homestead should go at last to the lad: Why not? there's nobody nearer, no wife nor child to mind; Dead, both dead, and lately I've thought I shouldn't be long behind.

I've somehow taken a notion that the first thing I shall see, When I open my eyes in another world, will be that red-bloomed tree;

The burden of years will drop away, and, young and strong again, I shall meet her under the orchard-boughs just as I met her then.

Another laugh for Mrs. Mark! it's lucky she isn't here; Visiting one of the neighbors, and Mark's in the meadow near. There's nothing stirring about the house but Rover there on the stone:

Do I miss their faces and talk to-night?—I never was less alone.

KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD.

FLOWER OF THE DAISY.

L.

IT was just a week before Christmas, and, perched on his three-legged stool, in the counting-room of the great house of Worthington Brothers, old Joe Darling, the ancient book-keeper of the firm, was finishing his Saturday-night's entries.

While thus engaged, a hand was laid on his shoulder, and, turning his head, he saw his old gray-haired employer, the sole survivor of the firm, beside him.

"It is the last time, my old friend," said the merchant, pointing to the ledger; "the news this evening decides every thing. Unless something happens before the first of January, Worthington Brothers must close doors, and wind up business, Joe!"

Old Joe started as he listened to these melancholy words, and a tremor ran through him.

"Don't say that! don't say that, Mr. Worthington, sir!" he exclaimed. And he dabbed his bald forehead with his old bandanna handkerchief as he spoke. "Don't say that Worthington Brothers will suspend payment, sir!"

"Worse than that, Joe," returned the old merchant, with a heavy sigh. "I see no hope of resuming. The great failures in Europe have hopelessly involved us—so that"—he stopped, with a gloomy expression in his eyes—"so that, on or before the first of January," he added, "the house will close its doors. I could bear that; but, when I think that the name of Worthington Brothers will be—dishonored—"

There the old merchant broke down. Joe Darling seized his hand, and cried, in a trembling voice:

"Don't, don't!—don't say that, sir! Don't use that word 'dishonored'! It is not so bad!"

"Ruin! ruin!—utter ruin!" groaned the merchant.

"No, no; not ruin! See here, sir. I—I—you see, I have saved a little!"

And old Joe drew from his pocket-book, with unsteady hands, certificates of deposit in bank.

"Take it, sir! It was made in your service!—honestly made—there's not a dirty shilling in it, sir. It is yours—and—"

He thrust the papers into the merchant's hand. But Mr. Worthington pushed them back.

"No, old friend," said the merchant, sighing deeply, but speaking in a voice of resignation—"no, that is not the way Worthington Brothers do business! If we fail, it shall be honestly—alone—after honorable exertion. We will not drag down our friends; and you, Joe, are our oldest and best. No, the house has kept faith and honor for fifty years. If ruin comes, we will go down alone. It is not our fault. I will do my duty, and trust in God, Joe, to the end!"

As he spoke, the old merchant went to his safe and took out a roll of bank-notes. Then he directed the various employés to be sent for, and paid them all up to the end of the week. He had a kind word for each, and an inquiry about every man's family or concerns; and then he turned to his desk. But the men did not go.

"What are you waiting for, my friends? Can I assist you in any manner?" asked the old merchant.

"If you please, sir," said the foremost of the party, "we would like to leave our money in your hands.—Eh?"

And the speaker turned toward his rough companions, who uttered a hoarse murmur of assent.

"Leave your money in my hands!" said the merchant.

"Jest so, sir," was the reply. "We hear tell how times are hard with Worthington Brothers, and the house in difficulties. Now, we don't want our money as yet, Mr. Worthington.—Eh? Do you?"

And he looked toward those in the rear. Another growl of assent replied.

"All which," the spokesman added, "goes to say, sir, that we are not in want. Keep the money, Mr. Worthington!"

The merchant gazed, with deep emotion, at the rough, honest faces.

"Thanks, thanks, my kind friends!" he said. "I now see what it is to try to do our duty. This proof of your friendship touches me deeply—but I cannot accept your offer. Such a small sum, besides, would be of little service to me. No, no!—keep it, and may God bless you and yours!"

The employés retired on this, not daring, it seemed, to intrude further on the head of the house.

"Father in heaven, I thank Thee!" murmured the merchant, and, turning away, he picked up the evening paper, to hide his emotion. As his eye fell upon it, a paragraph attracted his attention. It announced the failure of the bank in which the old book-keeper's savings had all been deposited. With a sigh, he handed it to Joe Darling, and said :

"I deeply regret this, my old friend. My ruin was enough!"

Old Joe read the announcement with a sinking heart, and echoed the sigh of his friend.

"The Lord's will be done, sir!" he said; "you might have had all—but I am now penniless. Your trouble is greater than mine. Any letters, sir, by to-night's mail? Any resources, or important intelligence?"

"No resources, Joe, and bad news—almost worse than all."

"Worse, sir?"

"Yes, yes. You remember my son Charley—of course you remember him. You know he went about two years since to live with Van Zandt & Co., at Antwerp?"

"Yes, sir. What of him? Don't tell me—he is not dead, sir?"

"No—that pang is spared me, but I have had, very bad news of Charley, my old friend. I wrote recently announcing our situation, and recommending his return, and Messrs. Van Zandt & Co. replied that he left them nearly a year ago."

"Left them?"

"Yes, yes. He had fallen into evil courses, and they reprimanded him—when he went off, no one knew where. Letters were written to me by the house, but they must have miscarried. Nothing has since been heard of Charley. I fear he has taken to more evil ways still. He may be dead indeed! Unhappy that I am! all connected with me seems to turn out badly!"

The merchant uttered a groan. Old Joe looked at him with deep commiseration.

"I am still more unfortunate than you are, Mr. Worthington," he said, in a low tone. "I had a son—a noble boy—he is dead, sir! You knew my Edmund? He was so handsome, so spirited, so bold; and he was lost at sea! He was on a whaler—the ship foundered, and the crew were lost. My poor Edmund! We are truly two unfortunate fathers, sir!"

There the conversation ended, and merchant and book-keeper separated.

Throughout the following week untiring efforts were made to collect the resources of Worthington Brothers. But slight success crowned the merchant's efforts to rescue the house. Friends of past years seemed to have grown cold, and regretted their inability to render assistance; and it was only by great sacrifices that the house succeeded in making all payments up to the day before Christmas. In this, however, the firm succeeded, and, as Mr. Worthington locked his safe, and put on his hat, he drew a long breath of relief. Then, taking his old book-keeper's arm, he went homeward with a thankful heart, and, as they separated at the corner, he murmured :

"Let us keep a good heart yet, old friend."

II.

Christmas morning, and the snow was falling, and the wind whirling it about like mad. A thousand goblins seemed laughing, and turning somersets, and hailing each other, as they sported around the gables, and whistled and rumbled in key-holes and chimneys, wild with mirth at the coming of Christmas; and old Joe Darling's small house, in a remote street of the great city, seemed especially honored by the hobgoblins, who shook the windows till they rattled again.

A great fire was burning, and the breakfast-table was set; and old Joe rubbed his hands in front of the blaze and looked out of the window, when a voice behind him, with a rush of laughter in it, and sounding like silver bells, exclaimed :

"Christmas-gift, father, dear! I've caught you!"

Old Joe turned round. As he did so, a pair of rosy lips pressed his cheek, and two arms clung round his neck, belonging to a little fairy of seventeen.

"Why, you look like a sunbeam, Daisy," he said.

And indeed the face resembled one, so brilliant was the light of the eyes. Daisy was small, with a neat, cosy figure, in a plain but pretty dress; and you saw at a glance that this was one of those little, nimble-fingered fairies who are the blessings of the homes in which they rule.

Her father smiled, and fondly passed his hand over her hair. As he gazed at her, he thought of his wellnigh penniless condition, and heaved a sigh.

"Poor little lady-bird! I have nothing for you!" he said, sighing again.

But Daisy did not seem to regard the circumstance as at all depressing. On the contrary, her face glowed, and, turning her bright head toward one side, she whispered :

"I've got a Christmas-gift for you, father dear."

"Have you? Now, you've gone and worked your little fingers to the bone. It's a cravat, or—?"

"No, indeed, I've done nothing of the sort—that is not your present."

The rush of joyous laughter in the girl's voice nearly drowned her words. She seemed bursting to reveal some secret. Their talk was interrupted, however, by the appearance of Mother Darling and her flock, with old Uncle John, looking wise and secretive.

Daisy had procured, somewhere, the handsomest Christmas-tree imaginable—a bushy cedar, full of light-blue berries; and, having returned from church, whither she went dutifully with the rest, she proceeded, with the aid of Uncle John, her prime friend and favorite, to deck the wondrous tree with its brilliant ornaments. As evening drew on it was finished, and erected on the sideboard—its paper baskets, and presents, and tapers, making it a magical spectacle to the young Darlings, who gazed at it with open-eyed wonder.

Then the Christmas dinner appeared, and riveted all eyes. The great roast turkey, and round of beef, and flanking side-dishes, aroused wild enthusiasm in the young ones—old Joe devoutly said grace—and the youthful members of the Darling family, chirping like a flock of birds, called each other's attention to the splendid banquet.

All sat down. Old Joe looked round.

"There's one seat too many," he said.
"I set it there, brother," said Uncle John, tranquilly.
"For whom, brother? Have you invited some friend?"
"No, brother, I thought of our Edmund."
The old book-keeper looked wistfully at his brother, and then went and held out his hand to him.

"Thank you, brother," he said, in a low voice, returning to his seat.

When the first pang had passed, it seemed a satisfaction to old Joe to gaze at the vacant chair, and to think of his son as present and enjoying their happiness. And when at last the dessert came, and the wine was poured out, the old man looked toward the vacant chair as he raised the glass to his lips.

Suddenly the voice of Daisy rang out, half choked with laughter:

"Why, we are forgetting our tree!" she cried; "we are really losing sight of our tree, uncle dear. Did anybody ever!—"

And, not waiting for "anybody" to reply, Daisy started up, and, assisted by Uncle John, bore the magical cedar in its neat box, covered with evergreens, to the centre of the table.

Night had come now, and the tapers on the tree were lit. As the fairy spectacle of many-colored baskets, candy cornucopias, and presents of needle-work, and books, and garlands, flashed forth in the light of the tapers—as this splendid Christmas-tree burst forth on the eyes of all—the young Darlings uttered a suppressed cheer, and "Pet," in curls and a pinafore, made a reckless and desperate attempt to climb upon the board and carry the prize at the point of his baby-spoon.

"No, Pet!" cried Daisy, "wait till sister gives you yours! But first, Uncle John is going to tell a beautiful story! Will you listen, father dear, and mother? It is lovely!"

The rush of laughter in the voice made all look at Daisy. Why did the child's cheeks flush so, and why that dazzling light in her eyes?

But now Uncle John suddenly riveted everybody's attention. For the moment he was the centre of excited interest for the whole Darling family. He seemed to feel the responsibility resting upon him. He reflected for a moment—smiled dreamily; thrummed on the table—and then began :

"The tale I am going to relate, my dear young friends," said Uncle John, "I must first inform you, is strictly true in every particular. It was written down by the King of the Genii, and then caught up in the beak of a great bird called a roc—and the Prince Camaralzaman, having been shipwrecked on a desert island where the bird came to feed, killed the roc, and the story has been in the palace of Bagdad, where the prince lived, ever since."

At this commencement, the young Darlings exhibited an astounded interest. As to Pet, his excitement was beyond the power of words. His eyes resembled two saucers—his mouth opened to its utmost width—and, in the excess of his attention, he very nearly swallowed his baby-spoon. No one looked at Daisy. With one hand shading her eyes from the light, and the other placed upon her breast, she looked at Uncle John, or furtively toward her father.

Uncle John continued:

"Having told you, my dear children, how the story came to be known, I will next proceed to relate it for your entertainment:

"There once lived in the city of Bagdad an old merchant whose name was Barilzac, which, being translated, is Worthy-man. He had a clerk named Abou-ben-darling—not unlike the name of our own family—and for a long time Abou-ben-darling served the good merchant Barilzac, whose caravans brought to Bagdad all the treasures of the East. But misfortune came. The caravans were overwhelmed in the sands of the desert. The moment was near when Barilzac would probably be compelled to strew dust upon his head, and wander through the streets of Bagdad, crying, 'Barilzac, the merchant, is ruined!'

"This happened," continued Uncle John, "just before the great festivity which comes on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Snows. Abou-ben-darling came home that day, thinking of the misfortunes of his patron, and also of a great suffering of his own—for all of us must suffer, my children. His only son had been lost at sea, and the heart of Abou-ben-darling was sad. He returned to hold the festivity of the cedar-tree, but his heart felt heavy. 'Abou-ben-darling is miserable!' he said, 'there is no man more miserable!'

"As he thus spoke, his daughter Paribanou approached him.

The name Paribanou, my children, signifies the Flower of the Daisy. She came now to Abou-ben-darling, and, kissing him in the Eastern manner, said: 'O father dear! O Abou-ben-darling! do not despair! Behold, the feast is set, and the holy cedar-tree blazes; the tapers therein shine like stars, and many gifts hang down from the boughs of the wondrous tree!'

Hero Pet suddenly burst forth—"Why, it's like our tree!" he cried; only he left out the *r* in "tree."

"Silence, Pet! do not interrupt!" said Uncle John. "I continue: Abou-ben-darling sighed when his daughter thus spoke.

"Truly, Flower of the Daisy," he said, "thy cedar-tree shines; but my heart is dark, and there is no gift thereon for me."

"There is a gift for our father," said Paribanou, or Flower of the Daisy; and, as she spoke, there was a curious, hidden laughter in her voice. "There is a gift that our father will value more than all else—a package with his name on it, from a distant land!"

They did not look at Daisy, who was trembling, and whose hand scarce possessed strength to draw a letter from her bosom.

Uncle John continued:

"And Abou-ben-darling said: 'Where is this package, my child?' to which the Flower of the Daisy replied:

"'Father dear, it is here! See, I take it from the boughs of the holy cedar-tree, and give it to you!'"

As Uncle John uttered the words, Daisy sprang forward with a letter in her hand.

"Here it is, father dear!" she cried, bursting into tears and laughter. "It nearly killed me not to tell you! Oh, take it, take it! Our Edmund is not dead!"

And, throwing her arms around old Joe's neck, she sobbed upon his bosom, while, with eyes full of wonder, he read the letter from his son. As he read on, he seemed to doubt whether he was reading a real letter. His eyes closed; he uttered a sigh, and would have fainted, had not Uncle John caught him in his arms.

The letter was written to Daisy by her brother Edmund. He had been picked up in the Pacific and carried to the South Seas by a trading-vessel—thence he had worked his way to California—encountered Charles Worthington roaming about in the gold region—they had speculated there and made great fortunes—and were coming home in the next steamer. That was the letter.

As old Joe grew faint, Pet suddenly ran behind his mother's apron, uttering an appaling scream.

At the door stood a tall young man, with a ferocious beard.

"How are you, father and mother, and uncle, and Daisy?"

They ran into his arms, uttering cries and sobs. The sailor was home again, never to leave them more; and, as Daisy rested in her dear brother's arms, with her rosy cheek upon his breast, she said, laughing and crying:

"Father dear! how do you like your Christmas-gift?"

The windows shook as she spoke—it was doubtless the merry goblins highly pleased with themselves and everybody else; and the holy night, the happy blessed night, went on its way full of joy and gratitude.

A year afterward—strange to say—Christmas came again! and saw the house of Worthington Brothers prosperous, and old Joe happy, and Charles the husband of the Flower of the Daisy. And again the cedar-tree was lit, and spread around its cheerful light, and the loud wind laughed, and the merry goblins seemed to shout:

"A merry, merry Christmas!"

JOHN ESTEN COOKE.

TRADITIONS OF THE CROSS.

THE trees of Palestine are chiefly the olive, fig, orange, and pomegranate, and it is probable that the cross on which Jesus suffered was made from one of the two last named. The fig and olive are not likely to have been used for the crucifixion, on account of their value. An Arab or Jew who possesses an olive, or a couple of fig-trees, with a patch of ground in one of the valleys in the neighborhood of Jerusalem or Bethlehem, forty or fifty feet square, and a camel, is accounted well off. There has been little or no change for the last eighteen hundred years in the appearance, circumstances, and manner of life of these people, and the values of to-day are likely not far from those of the time of Christ. The olives and the figs are

among the principal productions of this sterile land, and it is improbable that the trees of either of these fruits should have been cut down for the crucifixions which were common at the time of Christ, when the pomegranate or orange trees of inferior value answered the purpose as well.

Scientific men have made efforts to get some clew as to where the tree grew from which the cross was made, through Jewish, early Christian, or Arabic sources of information, but without any result, or next to none. There is no written account of it, that can be regarded as trustworthy, in Jewish chronicles or the Talmud, nor in the writings of the early fathers; nor have they any tradition of the tree. While in Jerusalem, I made inquiries of the monks and priests of the Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Abyssinian, and Armenian Churches, as to the existence of such tradition in their respective churches, and they uniformly replied that they held none. As to the Protestant, represented by the Church of England, in the way of historical or archaeological evidence, it holds to little else than Holy Writ and the hills and valleys.

The only religious body which has a tradition of the tree is the Greek Church. I went out to the spot where it is said to have grown, by the Jaffa gate (on the Big-Tree road), in a western direction, about twenty minutes' walk from the city, through the decaying tombs of the Mohammedan cemetery. A large convent covers, and was consecrated to, the place, and is called the Convent of the Cross. The building is situated in a green valley, and surrounded by a grove of olive-trees. It is massive, with some pretension to architectural finish, as well as strength. The entrance is by a low doorway, guarded by a heavy iron door, which is opened to the visitor with precaution. The main part of the building is the church, which, like all the Greek churches of the East, has its gaudily-ornamented altarscreen, pendent ostrich-eggs, and wretched pictures of the Passion, and patriarchal dignitaries.

A Greek monk, after having shown me over the grounds and adjacent buildings, proceeded toward the altar of the church, where I was introduced behind the screen, stiff with metallic ornaments. Here he raised his finger, and assumed an air of mystery. He took my hand and led me under the altar, where he pointed to a small, round hole in a rock, which seemed to be of several feet depth. The hole was rimmed with silver, and stood under the middle of the sanctum.

"The holy tree grew here," said he, as he pointed to it.

He afterward conducted me behind the sanctum by a subterranean passage to a vault, where he showed me a large crevice in the rock, through which the main root of the tree had extended.

My common-sense told me that a tree could never have grown in such a place, and I rejected the tradition on which this convent was founded.

Besides, the Greek Church is more noted for the practice of pious frauds than any other of the East; the most notorious of which is the bringing down of the fire from heaven into the Holy Sepulchre, through the agency of the Fire-bishop—hence all traditions emanating from it are almost as likely to be false as true.

It may be safely affirmed that it is not known where the tree grew. But, as compensation for the absence of such knowledge, several of the churches, represented by their priests, have pieces of the cross in their possession, to say nothing of what has been sold or given to royal and shining lights of the faithful in times gone by.

It is pretty well ascertained now that traditions of every kind in the East are so hopelessly entangled with Oriental exaggeration and monkish ignorance and fanaticism, as to be unworthy of credit, unless borne out by thorough historical and scientific research. These traditions, perpetuated by miracle-loving monks and painters, representing the spirit of their age, have done much toward misleading the public mind in matters touching the life of Christ.

The cross, for instance, is generally represented as twice the length of the figure stretched upon it. No especial information as to the height of that which bore the Great Sufferer has ever been obtained, but it is known that the cross upon which victims were crucified at, or not far from, that epoch, were usually of such a height as to leave the feet about twelve or fifteen inches from the ground, and it is reasonable to suppose that the cross of Jesus was no exception to the rest.

Thus, it was much smaller than is generally believed, and He doubtless did not fall under it from its heaviness so much as from exhaustion through mental and physical suffering. He was probably

subjected to other indignities besides the blows received before the high-priest, the flagellation and crowning of thorns, recorded in Holy Writ, especially during the journey, when He was seized by the angry Jews and conducted before the high-priest. From the garden to the house of the latter, nothing is known as to what happened. The distance between these two places is nearly a quarter of a mile, and it is probable that the angry Jews, still further provoked by the smiting Peter, subjected Him to scoff and outrage during this march. Part of the way is up the steep side before the western wall of Jerusalem, and the progress of the rabble with their Victim must have been necessarily slow. The fanatical Jews by whom He was pushed and jostled, during this memorable journey, hardly would have refrained from striking. There is, too, the tradition of the blow given to Him by the Jew when He began His march toward Calvary, telling Him, as he struck, to march faster. The imprisonment, flagellation, and crowning of thorns, with other unrecorded outrages, must have reduced Him to a condition of prostration that rendered the carrying of the ordinary-sized cross a very heavy task. The Greeks hold that He fell under it twice, and the Latins three times. When Simon the Cyrenian took it up, no mention is made of his giving way under it, nor has any tradition come down to that effect.

There are many cases of historical or traditional misrepresentation concerning this land. Two notable instances are those of the pillar of the flagellation, and the representative head of Christ, as fancifully described by theologists, and portrayed by painters. The pillar to which He was tied when scourged is given as lofty, reaching high above the head. It was in reality a short column, from one and a half to two feet high, to which the scourged were attached by the hands, and in this way were compelled to bow down and receive the lashes on the back, which was divested of clothing; the instrument of torture was several thongs attached together, with sharp pieces of iron or lead at the ends, which Horace calls *horribile flagellum*.

The Christ of painters is blue-eyed and golden-haired, and such a one never existed save in their imaginations. A blond in the race of Syrian Jews is unknown. He was a *brun* (since we have no word in our language which describes a man with dark hair and eyes, and olive complexion) of that race. There are pious people who have recourse to a miracle to make Him a blond, with whom it is useless to argue. Generally, the stoutest defenders of His divinity believe that in taking on Himself man's nature, He subjected Himself to the laws which govern it, and that He thus inherited the characteristics of the race from which He sprung. Leonardo, Guido, Raphael, and other masters, created their Christ regardless of historical requirements, and invested Him with an ideal character which He never possessed—according to their ideas of the beautiful in art. This model, once imposed, has since been perpetuated by all painters, because they think blue eyes more spiritual than dark, and golden hair more godlike than black.

They had an idea, too, that the Jewish type of face was ignoble, which may have had some foundation from the degradation to which the race was forced for so many centuries by persecuting Christians, and they thus had their prejudices against investing the Saviour with the traits of a people whom they despised. But the Jew of Syria in the day of Jesus was, before his persecution and consequent debasement, perhaps the equal of the man of any other race in point of natural advantages. There are Syrian Jews now, in isolated habitations in Palestine, who are remarkable for their handsome traits.

The realistic head of Christ has yet to be painted by a great painter, and, to my mind, it will be nobler and more divine than the creations of the great masters, because it will be true.

Returning to the cross, there is a tradition that, after being lost for over three centuries, it was discovered in a subterranean chapel which forms part of the huge and irregular Church of the Holy Sepulchre, by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine. According to the historians who describe the discovery, she, inspired by Heaven, went and prayed on the eastern part of Calvary, in the extravagant language of her time—much as Eusebius, the bishop-historian, wrote. While she prayed, the workmen, who labored with saintly ardor, at length found at the bottom of a deep grotto three crosses, the title, the lances, and the nails. As the title or tablet which Pilate had written was detached, the cross of the Saviour could not be recognized. The empress consulted Macarius, then bishop in the Holy City, who ordered public prayers to be said, in order that the true cross might be identified. Then it appears that the empress, under the

spiritual guidance of the bishop, proceeded with the three crosses to the house of a dying woman in Jerusalem. The bishop, approaching the bed of the person, who was at death's door, knelt down, prayed, and finished thus: "Make known to us, in an obvious manner, which of these three crosses bore the Saviour, and permit that this expiring woman may come back to life from the gates of death as soon as the salutary wood shall have touched her."

The bishop touched her with the three crosses, one after another. No sooner did the last come in contact with the dying woman, than she sprang to her feet, instantaneously cured, and ran about the house glorifying God, as well as she ever was in her life. The same day Macarius met a corpse that a great crowd accompanied to the cemetery. He commanded those who bore the body to stop, and touched it with the two crosses without effect—those which were found ineffective in the case of the dying woman. But, as soon as he touched the dead man with the cross of the Saviour, he, like another Lazarus, was raised from the dead.

There are other miracles which, according to tradition, were performed with the cross, or portions of it, but none which have received such thorough sanction from the Church as those done through the agency of the empress and Macarius. The empress was very old and very pious, and she took up the mission of discovering holy places and reliquies, and building altars and churches on the places of her discoveries. She was warmly seconded by her apostolic friend Macarius, who was probably sincere in the miracles at which he assisted—considering the times in which he lived. Of course, an altar stands in the Chapel of Helena, where the discovery is alleged to have been made, hung with lamps and trinkets, before which pilgrims prostrate themselves every day.

It is said that the Emperor Heraclius, in the seventh century, carried back the cross to Calvary, from which it had been taken fourteen years before, and that he was so gorgeously arrayed in gold and precious stones, he could not get through the gateway leading to the mount, when, taking the advice of a patriarch, he threw off the imperial trappings, shouldered the cross again, and marched through barefooted without difficulty.

The monks affirm that the true cross entire, or in fragments, was borne by the crusaders in front of their armies, by virtue of which they achieved wonderful victories—notwithstanding which, it seems that Saladin, at least once, wrested it from them.

One fragment of the wood was placed in the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme at Rome, which was built expressly to receive it; another was put in the head of a statue of Constantine at Constantinople, and another was preserved in Poland till the seventeenth century, whence it found its way into the hands of the monks of Saint-Germain at Paris. Smaller pieces are held in other places throughout the world.

According to Constantine, he saw a flaming cross in the heavens, and from that time he fought his battles with this symbol as a standard, with which was written the famous *Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα*—"By this conquer"—afterward Latinized on the Roman banners.

Of the four nails used in the crucifixion of Jesus, the town of Trèves is said to possess one. Constantine turned one into a horse-bit, and placed another in his crown. The fourth was cast into the Adriatic, during a tempest, by the Empress Helena, when the waves were immediately stilled. This account of the whereabouts of the nails is considered orthodox. All others, put forward by rival claimants of the sacred iron, are regarded with suspicion by the ecclesiastical authorities.

Wonderful cures and miracles have been performed with pieces of the cross up to the beginning of the present century; but in these latter days seldom any thing of the kind is attempted, either from loss of virtue in the wood or the skepticism of the age. If all the wood were collected together which has gone out of Palestine as parts of the true cross, there would doubtless be enough to construct a small town. In the days of superstition and ignorance, pieces of the wood yielded a rich revenue to the priests and monks of Jerusalem. Now, rarely any of it is to be seen. I was shown a piece about the size of a man's hand, together with a few thorns of the crown, both securely attached under a heavy glass plate, in the Greek Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. According to the accounts of the believers of the discovery of the true cross, it was buried for several hundred years. The consideration of this fact, to a thinking man, will lead him to a summary conclusion as to its claims to authenticity.

The Turkish barracks now occupy the spot where the Praetorium of Pilate is believed to have been. According to tradition, the Way of the Cross begins here. The doorway is shown—now walled up—where He appeared to the people, crowned with thorns and robed in purple. The stairs by which He descended into the street, it is alleged, were conveyed to Rome, where I once sought them out in the basilica of St. John, and discovered to my surprise a magnificent flight of steps of a marble unknown in Palestine, and about three times as broad as the doorway of the Praetorium at Jerusalem! When Jesus was well into the street and before the eyes of the people, Pilate pronounced his "Behold the man!" which is commemorated by an arch over the spot where He is supposed to have stood when thus pointed out—the "Ecce Homo Arch." The Way of the Cross continues from here through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, until it enters the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and terminates at the Tomb. It is thronged with pilgrims during a portion of the year, under the guidance of monks and priests, who point out the places where the incidents connected with the bearing of the cross are said to have happened. The mass of the pilgrims are illiterate and free from the doubts of the skilled reasoner, and what they see is seen with the eye of faith. Emotional effects follow the contemplation of each spot. They sometimes prostrate themselves, sobbing incoherent prayers—stimulated by their spiritual guides.

Much has been written about these stations of the Via Dolorosa, and general readers are familiar with them. The Churches differ widely concerning these traditions. The Greek and other Eastern Churches have but five stations, while the Latin has fifteen. The Greek, for instance, deny *in toto* the incident of the wiping of the face of Jesus with a napkin by the Lady Veronica. On stated occasions the napkin is exhibited at Rome, bearing the impress of the Saviour's features. The Latins hold that Saint Veronica was an illustrious and pious woman, well known at the time of the Crucifixion.

In crucifying, it was the custom to lay the cross on the ground, and there nail the victim, then elevate and plant it in a hole dug for the purpose. When the body of the crucified was heavy, and the flesh tender, the feet and hands would tear, which was remedied by placing a block or stone under the feet. This did not always proceed from the weight of the crucified, but sometimes from the writhing and jerking incident to suffering. The wounds inflicted in the nailing were not usually sufficient to produce death. The crucified frequently died from starvation and thirst, when of a rugged, strong organization. Those of sensitive, nervous natures, died soon from pain. The torture of such a death could scarcely be exceeded by any other. The subtle organization which it is believed Christ possessed soon brought His sufferings to an end.

That they did not die necessarily from crucifixion has been shown as late as the reign of Louis XV., when several religious enthusiasts, called *Convulsionnaires*, underwent voluntary crucifixion. Two of them, Rachel and Félicité, were nailed to the cross with nails five inches long, in presence of the historian who relates the act, and, thus attached, the crosses were elevated, and the women remained for several hours before they were taken down. They both survived, to undergo other crucifixions.

In the time of Christ, when the victim offered resistance, which was frequently the case, he was tied to the cross with ropes until nailed. Sometimes, when the intention was to punish without killing, the crucified was tied to the cross and elevated for several hours or a day, and then released.

The sponge, saturated with vinegar and hyssop, pressed to the mouth, was an act of mercy. It was a custom of the times thus to allay the thirst of the crucified, and it has been found in old Hebraic documents that these things were furnished at the public cost. That Jesus died sooner than was usual, is shown in the doubting question of Pilate when apprised of His death.

There is a tradition that the soldier who pierced the side of the sufferer, seized with remorse, repented and became a follower of Him whom he had thus pierced, and afterward withdrew into Cappadocia, where he suffered martyrdom.

As the inhabitants often walked of an evening on their terraced house-tops, it is not improbable that Pilate, from the Praetorium, saw the Crucifixion from afar, over the walls of the city, owing to the elevation of Calvary.



A CHRISTMAS MORNING ON THE ICE.

FROM A PAINTING BY J. TISSOT.



"Please come and cut our Christmas Tree, Uncle Caesar."

CHRISTMAS IN VIRGINIA.

BY W. L. SHEPPARD.

OUR CHRISTMAS ENGRAVINGS.

CHRISTMAS IN VIRGINIA.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY W. L. SHEPPARD.

PROBABLY in no part of our country can be found more recognizable traces of descent, as discovered in the manners and customs of the people, than in Virginia; and this is notably true of the festival of Christmas.

Settled as the country was by the class who had been chief conservators of the time-honored jollity and good cheer of that season, it was natural that the customs should be cherished in the New Land—if for no other reason—as a *souvenir* of the Old. Nor was there a temporary check upon all “vaine and ungodly sportes” during the Protectorate, and for a short time after the Restoration, as was the case in England; but, with the wilderness around them, with the “salvage” men as astonished witnesses, those early Virginians made as much of “Morrie Christmase” as circumstances permitted.

But the little episode of Christmas-tide, presented in the engraving on another page, is not illustrative of a traditional Christmas custom in Virginia; rather, on the contrary, of one very recently engrafted. For, while the Yule Log is English, the Christmas Tree is German or Dutch; and, though the impudent young ones in the sketch are not aware of it, they are urging Uncle Caesar to connive at an innovation, which was a novelty to their fathers, imported from the North.

However, the Christmas Tree is a fact in Virginia now, and these youngsters, having opportunely come upon Uncle Caesar at the wood-pile, his axe in hand, are determined to impress his services to secure a proper holly or cedar.

To a native, the old man’s reply easily suggests itself:

“Go ‘way from here, chillun! don’t you see I got to cut the white folks’ wood?”

Old darkies never have time to do any thing for children on the first demand, but there is no doubt that Uncle Caesar went, in a grumbly sort of way, and with an air of contemptuous indifference managed to select the most eligible tree, with the most berries.

The chilly stable-boy stops to hear the end of the colloquy. He has probably taken a mule to water, and is very anxious to get to the fire himself, but he is certain to follow the party, for there is enough “Christmas” in his bones to keep out the cold, and he is likely to be the most enthusiastic member, for he knows that the kindly Virginia Christmas will include him in its festivities.

CHRISTMAS AT THE ANTIPODES.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY FENN.

We of the English race are so accustomed to associate Christmas with the frosts and snows of midwinter that we can hardly realize the fact that in more than half the world the great festival occurs, and is celebrated, under very different circumstances. A year or two ago, a clergyman in one of our Northern States preached a sermon in which he reminded his hearers that Christmas was sent when the ground was frozen and the rivers locked, etc., that our charitable dispositions might be stimulated. That was well enough for the latitude. But the argument was hardly applicable in all quarters where Christmas is celebrated. Even the poets have fallen into the same blunder. The Rev. Charles T. Brooks thus sings of the New Year:

“Not in the gush of spring,
When every living thing
Hails the green dawn that flourishes o’er the earth;
Not in the tender hour
Of bird and bud and flower,
Men greet the new-born year with joy and mirth:
But when the frozen ground
Rings with a cheerless sound,
When groves are dumb, and waters ice-bound lie,
In a cold, wintry light,
Robed in a snowy white,
The infant year opens his broad, bright eye.”

A happy counterpart to these verses may be found in the following extract from a Christmas lyric, entitled “Five Thousand Leagues away,” written by an Australian poet:

“Yes! This is the happy Christmas-time, and yet how strange it seems!
The crimson flush on the flowering bush, the flame on the splendid streams;

The sun’s bold glance—the mirage-dance of the bright Australian noon—
As the warm-breathed breeze just stirs the trees that girdle the broad M-
goon.

Still, as I gaze on the blooms that fringe the wild creek’s sunny flow,
I think of faces far away where the fields are white with snow!

And wonder and weep—“Will their memories keep,
‘Mid the mirth of this gladsome day,
A sacred place for an absent face
Five thousand leagues away?”

“Again I see the old elm-tree, with its branches bleak and bare,
And the rustic seat where lovers meet—yes! lovers and seat are there;
And I fancy I know that arch, bright smile, the turn of the glittering curl
That hangs (like the spray of the fruitful vine) on the neck of a lovely girl
And the sterner face, above her bent, is lit with a softer light,
As her voice falls low like a wavelet’s song when sunset fades to night.

And they list to the merry Christmas chimes,
And laugh. Ah! well-a-day!

Does she ever think of a changeless face
Five thousand leagues away?

“The snow may rest in last year’s nest that hangs on the hazel-copee;
But the birds will sit through the boughs, and sit again in the rocking tops;
Though the cottage-eaves are lone, and miss the flash of a welcome wing,
We know the swallows will come again with the sunshine and the spring.
And so, returned, an old, old love in each true bosom swells,
When the end, sweet rhyme of an ancient time chimes in with the Christ-
mas bells.

Ah! then their memories turn to me,
And ‘God’s blessing’ still I pray

On the eyes that dim when they think of him
Five thousand leagues away!

“I know life’s time of golden prime—the beautiful time of yore—
Has faded away, like a fallen star that will shine in heaven no more;
And I sometimes yearn to backward turn my steps, and a day relive,
That my lips might sound the happy laugh that only a child can give!
But, ah! ‘tis vain: we can ne’er regain our childhood’s sand of gold;
‘Tis well, as our bodies fade and fail, if our spirits grow not old!

That heart to heart in love may start

With the bells of each Christmas-day:

‘Lord, keep our memories green’ for those

Five thousand leagues away!”

CHRISTMAS BRINGS GOOD CHEER.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN A. HOWS.

To all good folk everywhere, we trust! Mr. Hows has embodied in a poetical group much of the traditional good cheer associated with the day, and the savory banquets his delineation suggests are calculated to awaken an eager appetite for the cheer so felicitously promised. The old-fashioned fireplace, whose boundaries are too ample to be fully included in the sketch, presents a cheer, however, that in too many homes exists only in imagination. “Christmas cheer” around an air-tight stove, or a “register” in the floor, seems to lose all its glow, its ripe and mellow felicity. People who warm themselves by furnaces ought, if only for the sake of “auld lang syne,” to restore the old-fashioned wood-fire at “Christmas-tide,” and for one occasion during the winter experience the hilarious mirth and hearty fellowship that, according to tradition and the poets, pertain to the hearth-stones of old. Mr. Hows has connected the cheer of the old times and the new—the tankard and the boar’s-head tell us of an old English Christmas, while the American turkey illustrates the cheer of the present. If the turkey may be said to be more especially the bird consecrated to Thanksgiving-day, it must be remembered that this is only true of a part of our country. All through the South, at least, it adorns the Christmas feast; and there, moreover, the ancient, ample fireplaces are still in their full use and appreciation.

GRANDPAPA’S CHRISTMAS VISITORS.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY W. B. MYERS.

MR. MYERS has drawn for us here a domestic incident that has fallen within every one’s experience or observation. There are few greater pleasures in the estimation of children than a visit to grandpapa or grandmamma at any season, and, of course, at Christmas-time it becomes a great event. Presents are certain to abound. Toys of new and marvellous construction, books of fascinating adven-

ture, dolls of enchanting beauty, candies and good things that would captivate the dullest relish for sweets—all these things are the inevitable result of a Christmas assault upon grandpapa's parlors. And on this occasion there are no restrictions upon the noisy merriment of the visitors. At other times, pleasant as are the visits, grandpapa or grandmamma may have a headache—neither ever has a headache on Christmas. At other times they may be too much occupied to take notice of their young guests—neither has any thing to do on Christmas but to make merry with them. Sometimes, on other occasions, grandpapa is sad—who ever saw a grandfather sad on Christmas? The little ones never saw such a thing, certainly. There may be sad memories around the heart, there may be painful thoughts of Christmases past which were graced by faces now seen no more, but grandpapa is sure, in the abundant love for his merry-hearted visitors, to conceal all these emotions, and to astonish them with many a merry prank or a funny joke. May all of us, who cherish fond memories of the love and tenderness showered upon us by our grandparents gone, live to gather at many a Christmas upon our own knees the fair fruits of our children's love!

A CHRISTMAS MORNING ON THE ICE.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION.

An hour on the skates, Christmas morning, is well calculated to give relish and freshness to all the social pleasures of the rest of the day. Our young lady and her little companion are obviously at ease on their skates; they would charm the fancy of Theodore Winthrop, who wrote with such enthusiasm of this delightful sport. Whether they are simply passing a spirited and enjoyable holiday on the ice, or wending their way by this means of journeying to some cheerful heart, where they are expected, the reader is privileged to determine for himself. The picture is a graceful and pleasing one, irrespective of the purpose of the fair skaters, and is likely to stimulate some of our lady-readers to follow the example thus set, and devote themselves to the most fascinating of out-door sports. Winthrop tells us that pluck is the first quality of skating—then enthusiasm, then patience, then pertinacity, then a fine aesthetic quality called good taste. These five qualifications young women are prone to possess in an eminent degree—so let them put them to good service on the present Christmas, if Jack Frost kindly prepares the crystal plane for their use.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The time draws nigh the birth of Christ."

TENNYSON.

THE subject of Christmas—that subject so mystical and merry, so pathetic and jovial—exhausted! Inconsiderate thinker! Why, if certain geologists be right, who maintain that our lady Earth is only now in her prime, her "fair, fat, and forty" epoch; and, if you admit Christianity to be a power progressive, not decaying, then the topic of Christmas has only been treated, as it were, in prefaces, and by prologues; the main discourse, the body of the song, is yet to come! Exhausted, forsooth! O miserable feebleness of faith! Here is genial Leigh Hunt, the very incarnation, while in life, of a mood or spirit that is emphatically of Christmas, declaring that volumes remain to be penned upon the mere separate items we associate with that wonderful season.

He mentions upward of *seventy* of these, beginning with "roast-beef and plum-pudding," and ending, characteristically, with "love, hope, charity, and endeavor;" concerning which he exclaims, "*Esto perpetua*, and plum-pudding enough by-and-by all the year round for everybody that likes it!"

In an historic-religious and social point of view, how quaint, tender, impressive, or pleasantly grotesque, are the pictures and legends connected with the Christmas-tide!

The first authoritative command to keep the time holy is attributed to Clement, a *collaborateur* with St. Paul, and mentioned by the latter in the Epistle to the Philippians. Clement says: "Brethren, keep diligently feast-days, and truly, in the first place, the day of Christ's birth."

It is the "golden-mouthed" Chrysostom who, referring to Christmas, eloquently terms it "the most venerable and tremendous of all festivals, the metropolis and mother of all."

But it is chiefly in its secular and social aspects that we purpose to discuss the claims of Christmas now. Indissolubly are these associated with our ancestral English homes. Up the centuries and down the centuries we wander, making Christmas pictures in our minds, but always in the background are the characteristic features of English scenery and English customs.

Upon the period of the sixteenth century we instinctively settle, as the period *par excellence* of Christmas festivity in England. Then it was that the pageantry of feasting, in the halls of the gentry and nobility, was carried to its greatest degree of splendor. In the houses, we are told, of the aristocratic and wealthy, the "dinner itself, laid out with great pomp, was always accompanied with music, and not unfrequently interrupted with dances, mumblings, and masquerades."

Everywhere, during the twelve days of the olden Christmas, these halls resounded with uproarious merry-making. Indeed, it appears that the royal authority was often exercised to admonish, and even, in a sense, to compel the nobles and landed proprietors to repair to their country-seats, and to keep open house for the entertainment of their vassals and neighbors.

What says Aubrey, in his quaint fashion, of these times?

"In the days of yore, lords and ladies lived in the country like petty kings; had *jura regalia* belonging to their seigniories; had their castles and boroughs; had gallows within their liberties, where they could try, condemn, and execute; never went to London but in parliament-time, or once a year to do homage to the king. They always ate in Gothic halls at the high table, or *orielle* (which is a little room at the upper end of the hall where stands a table), with the folks at the side-table. The meat was served by watchwords."

In the great hall innumerable plays, sports, and devices, were practised, the names of which have come down to us. Some of these names are suggestive. For example, "shoeing the wild mare," "puss in the corner," "thread the needle," "snap-dragon," "feed the dove," "twelfth cake," "loaf-stealing," "yule-booga," etc.

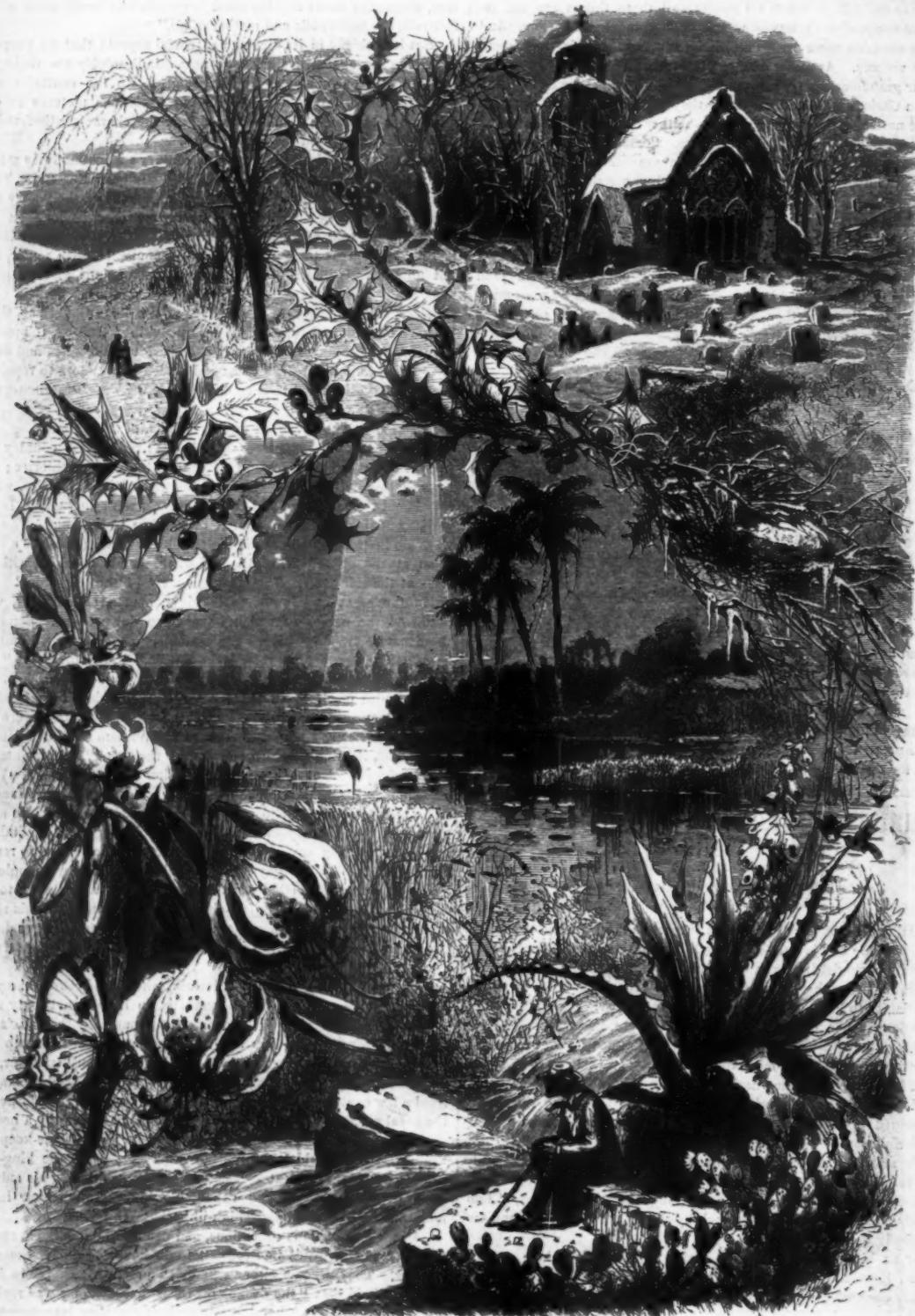
Examples of "fine old English gentlemen," who encouraged the most fantastic and extravagant celebrations of Christmas, are not hard to find. First among them was Sir William Hollis, of Houghton Chapel, Nottinghamshire, surnamed "the Good," who maintained that Christmas *ought* to begin at All Hallow Tide (October 31st) and continue until Candlemas (February 2d). He showed the sincerity of his views in this particular by keeping his house, during the whole of the three months specified, "in great splendor and hospitality," and by permitting any guest whatsoever, saint or sinner, to remain for the space of *three* days without being troubled by a single disagreeable question. (One can't help wondering a little as to the integrity of Sir William's plate-chest, and the number of his silver spoons that were left intact after some of these three-day guests had departed, doubtless abiding not the full expiration of their term of grace.)

Then there was the Duke of Norfolk, who lived between the years 1648 and 1679, and who spent annually no less than twenty thousand pounds in keeping Christmas. Not unnaturally the duke's profuse expenditure made Charles II. (always somehow "hard up" for money) both envious and angry. "Why, that man's splendor," he exclaimed, "eclipses his king's!"—a sufficient reason, had his majesty lived a few centuries earlier, to have justified the royal conscience, had the royal authority ordered the duke to be made shorter by a head.

With this same Charles II. the glories of "Christmas-keeping" declined. How could it have been otherwise, when the king—unwarned by his father's fate—insisted upon impoverishing his subjects by heartless exactions, and exhausting himself and court in the maintenance of everlasting "high jinks" at Whitehall?

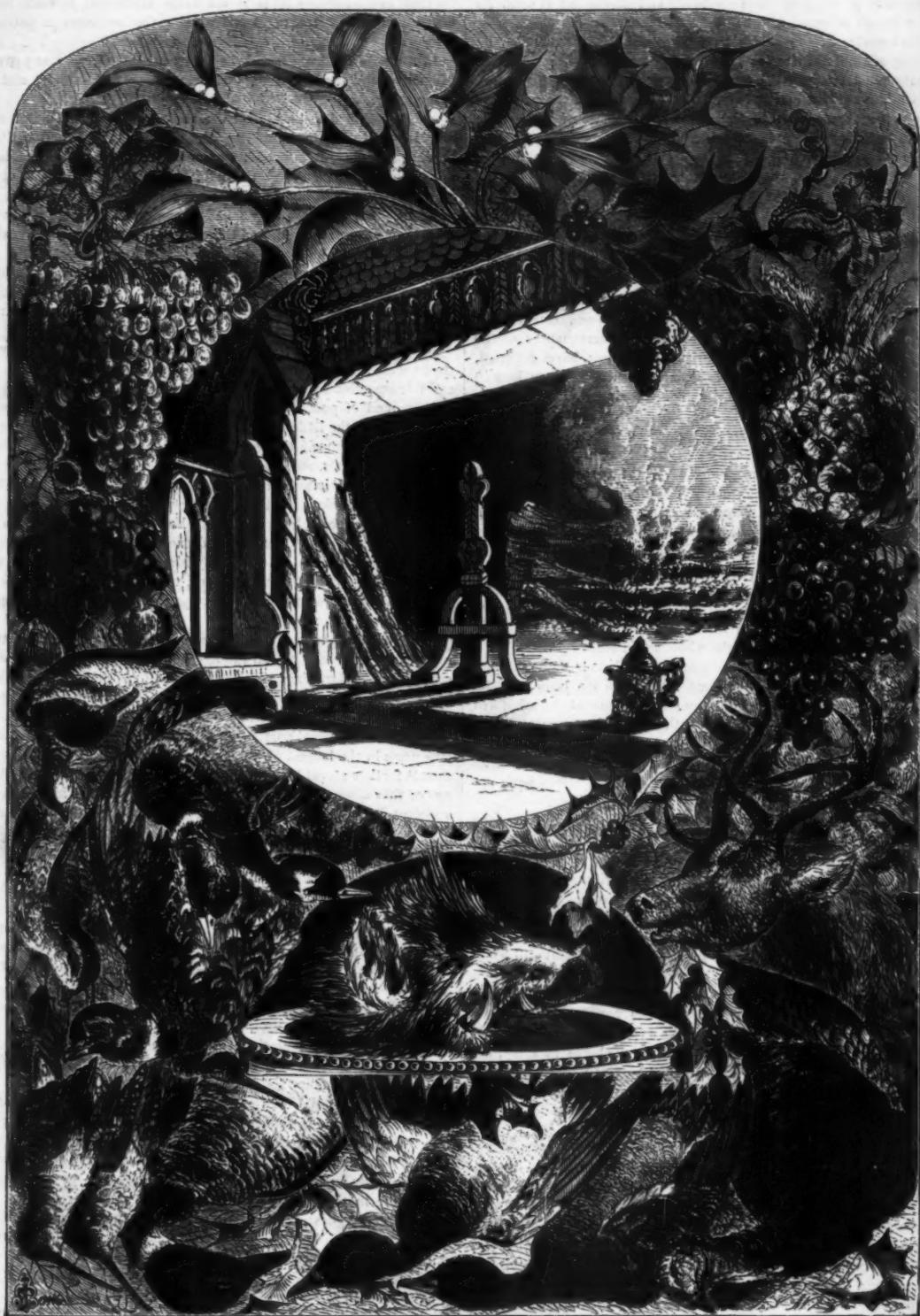
A king's example is contagious, and people who indulge in roaring revelry every day can't be expected to do honor to special times and seasons. They become either exhausted or *blasé*. Therefore has it well been said that "the decline of Christmas customs was really as much owing to the general corruption of manners introduced into England by a profligate king and court, as it was to any influence exercised upon them by the severe Puritanism of Cromwell."

Of the few antique ceremonials in honor of Christmas that still survive in certain parts of England, and which, some years since, used



CHRISTMAS AT THE ANTIPODES; OR, "FIVE THOUSAND LEAGUES AWAY."

BY HARRY FENN.



"CHRISTMAS BRINGS GOOD CHEER."

BY JOHN A. HOWS.

to be followed in many an opulent family of Virginia—the pomp and circumstance of bringing in the yule-log and depositing it upon its flaming throne of honor, may be particularly mentioned.

What reader of the Elizabethan poets can fail to remember the yule-song of stout old Herrick (of whom, by-the-way, it is related that too great an affection for the "wassail-bowl" left him, at the end of every Christmas, in a condition which, if pardonable in the poet, was hardly to be excused in the churchman)? One stanza of his lyric runs thus, and is rather a curious than graceful composition:

"With the last year's brand,
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your pauperies play,
That sweet luck may
Come, while the log is a-tending." *

From the England of the sixteenth, to the America of the nineteenth century, is but a step for so active a wizard as Fancy. She shuns the old musty records with a snap, and turns inquisitively to the new. And what is the result? Why, she discovers, and triumphantly points out the fact that, if the splendor and picturesqueness of the past, touching those Old-World Christmas customs have departed, nevertheless the genuine spirit of Christmas survives, even here in our loud, practical, busy, unromantic, money-loving, and irrepressible republic.

How clearly does this appear in a large city like New York, as the 25th of December draws nearer and nearer! Half unconsciously to themselves, the portliest magnates of Wall Street, intent most of the year upon stocks and consols, dividends and State securities, just as the one blessed relaxation-season approaches, begin to realize a strange expansion, a marvellous enlargement of heart under their imposing broadcloth waistcoats, and to anticipate, with secret smacking of lips, "that warm, champagne, old particular, brandy-punchy feeling," under the inspiration of which the hard egotisms and cruel selfishness of business-life (as too often conducted) melt, disappear, and are fused down into unwonted cordiality and a benevolence that would fain make the whole world akin.

In sooth, one of the greatest of mortal magicians is Father Christmas. He lays his viewless but potent hand upon the brow of Care, and its stern lines are smoothed. From some enchanted flask, filled with the waters of that "fountain of youth" which no dreaming Ponce Leon among earth's bravest knight-errants could ever find, he pours the sparkling liquid out, which causes manhood to feel *thrice* vigorous and hopeful, and, even to extreme old age, brings back not a little of the flush, glow, and enthusiasm of earlier times.

To appreciate fully the old wizard's power, we should call upon Asmodeus to coöperate with him.

Then, with palace and hut alike unroofed, we could behold throughout this vast city the domestic festivities wherewith the richest and poorest do homage to Christmas.

Heavens! what a series of pictures the bare thought calls up!

Here—let us suppose it Christmas Eve—is the millionaire in his stately Fifth-Avenue mansion, with his handsome wife, and still handsomer daughter, glittering in silks and jewels, and each acting charmingly the rôle of hostess to a select assemblage of the *beau monde*. A subtle, indescribable, but delicious perfume pervades the apartments; and such is the effect of the dazzling lights, the radiant beauty of the women, the noble pictures, and choice statuary, the music soft and voluptuous, or jubilant as the ring of Bacchic cymbals, that one feels bewildered, as in an atmosphere of glamour or illusion.

Take notice, too, that this is no common festival, in quite another aspect than that which refers to its mere magnificence, its material splendor. Examine the faces of the guests, of whatever sex, or apparent degree, and you will detect an indefinable *something* in the expression of each, which proves that the soul, thus shadowed forth, is at its *very best*.

Pass from the extreme of wealth to the extreme of poverty. What is it that we see in the faint light of stars—aided by a stray lamp or two—in the neighborhood of the foul-smelling docks? A family of vagrant boys, feasting upon sausages of doubtful ingredients, and drinking sour beer under the shelter of an empty tar-barrel. How cordial the brotherhood between them, and how perfect the *bonhomie*! They are rogues, probably, without an exception—these "Arabs of the street;" but just now the Christmas charm has passed into

their natures, and purged them, temporarily, of all viler propensities. On their rough *parvenu* faces is the same expression, however modified, which made more sweet and winning the loveliness of patrician beauty!

Between Fifth Avenue and the docks are, of course, many grades of society, and dwelling-houses of every variety of comfort and respectability.

"Good Asmodeus! whip off the roof from that small but solid mansion which fronts one of the quiet parks east of Broadway." It is Christmas-day, at last, and, moreover, it is dinner-time; perhaps, indeed, in accordance with the habits of a peaceful citizen of the merchant-class, the hour has come for the discussion of port and pudding. Ay, precisely as we had thought! The meat and vegetables have been removed, and there, at opposite sides of the mahogany, sit two individuals who richly deserve to be photographed. One is a portly, rosy old gentleman, a near relative—or we are strangely mistaken—of the Brothers Cheeryble, and the other is his grandson. The couple, as they now appear, reproduce in the oddest and minutest fashion a pen-and-ink sketch by a famous English artist.

Observe them in detail. What a world of secret similarity between them! How, as our artist has pointed out, hope in the one, and retrospection in the other, and appetite in both, meet over the same ground of pudding, and understand it to a nicely! How the senior banters the little boy on his third slice, and how the little boy thinks within himself that he dines that day as well as the senior! How both look hot, red, smiling, *juvenile*! How the little boy is conscious of the Christmas-box in his pocket! and how the grandfather is quite as conscious of the plum, or part of a plum, or whatever fraction it may be, in his own! How he incites the little boy to love money (honestly earned), and good dinners, all his life! and how determined the little boy is to abide by his advice, with a secret addition in favor of holidays and marbles, to which there is an analogy in the senior's mind on the side of trips to Long Branch and a game at whist!

The peculiar power of Christmas to bring out one's better nature, relieved for the time from all the ugly, clinging parasites of egotism, cruelty, and self-seeking, which through evil custom or our own weak indulgence may have attached themselves thereto, has been strangely exemplified in many instances. One of these, although of an exceptional if not abnormal sort, occurred annually for at least ten successive years in the largest of our Southwestern cities. Mr. S— (we cannot further reveal his name), a resident of that place, and at the age of fifty a successful factor and millionaire, met in his youth with a violent disappointment in love, which seemed to have poisoned every drop of blood in his body, and to have embittered the springs of a naturally warm, sympathetic temper at their innermost sources. Indeed, many circumstances might have been thought to prove that even his brain was somewhat unhinged. Thereafter, he went abroad with a yellow, jaundiced face, and the manners of a surly bear. He cut his acquaintances and his friends, ignored his nearest relatives, slept in the upper room of a dingy sailors' lodging-house, and devoted his whole time to the making of money. The richer he grew, the more unsocial, miserly, and morose, were his habits.

But, when Christmas came, a magical change would be remarked in the personal appearance, the bearing, the entire spirit of our Timon. Even his complexion looked less yellow, and his eyes, hidden generally under pent-house brows, emerged into the sunlight, and beamed with cordiality and benevolence.

For the whole of Christmas-week his charitable activity was unceasing. Through his personal exertions and by the help of agents, he gathered together each day no less than *thirty* persons, who, if not exactly "the halt, the lame, and the blind," were, at any rate, of the most destitute and forlorn description. To these he gave a sumptuous dinner in the best apartment of a first-class restaurant. The name of every guest, with his place of abode and business, if he had either, was carefully noted on a card; and, when the doors of the dining-room were thrown open, each person was announced as ceremoniously to Mr. S—, seated at the head of the table, as if it were a royal reception.

If any of the guests, upon the strength of this day's hospitality, sought their host afterward, and applied for help, no matter of what kind, they would invariably meet with icy indifference, or the most brutal contumely.

As already hinted, this odd creature may have been—probably

was—insane; still, what a commentary upon the heart-awakening power of the great Christmas festival were the results of the blessed season, as they affected his conduct and policy!

Through the thick folds of madness and misery, of a hard selfishness and cruel spiritual isolation, it pierced to the core of that humanity which rested latent in the man's nature, and for one little week he lived the pure, wholesome life of charity and liberated affection.

That fragment of right existence, that little term of action carried over to Heaven's side, may insensibly have lain, a sweetening drop, at the bottom of his sordid days, and prevented his whole soul from scouring and becoming meet for perdition.*

A word or two, and we have done—not because our *theme* is exhausted, even in regard to its superficial phases, but because our *readers* may be. Of all festival times, Christmas is the most independent of the weather. Its real enjoyment, especially in the country, must be found by the hearth-stone, in the very "bosom" (to borrow Mr. Micawber's favorite image) "of one's family." Who, with the fire roaring welcome, and gayly dispensing its warmth, radiance, and geniality; with the hot water and lemons duly arranged for punch, and a chorus of exhilarating laughter all about him; with the bright eyes of a bevy of pretty girls looking supernaturally lustrous in the golden flame-quiver—who would care, thus situated, although the winds outside were trying "to crack their cheeks," and all heaven and earth were in an uproar and "hurly-burly?"

Well do we recollect just such an occasion as this, a certain Christmas-day—alack, how long ago!—when sleet, rain, clouds, and mighty winds, conspired "to do sweet season wrong," but, we rejoice to say, miserably failed.

Here are some verses inspired by the remembrance—remembrance of a cozy little Eden *within*, and the "confusion worse confounded" of a rasping, roaring tempest *without*:

THE STORMY CHRISTMAS.

I.

Roar on, fierce Wind from over seas,
Besiege the roof-tiles, shake the pane,
Bend half to earth the quivering trees,
And plough wild furrows in the main :
You cannot reach our joyance here,
Couched in the heart of Christmas cheer.

II.

Beat, arrowy Sleet, on waste and wold,
Fall from weird heights of freezing skies,
Whose vapory darkness, fold on fold,
Hides the sweet morning's sapphire eyes :
Your shafts are vain to smite us here,
All lapped in Christmas warmth and cheer.

III.

Pour on, O mournful, sobbing Rain,
With heart-break in your mystic flow—
All Nature droops, as if in pain,
And shivers with a nameless woe—
You cannot drown our fancies fair,
Old dreams, and new, of Christmas cheer.

IV.

Roll wave by wave, with ebon foam,
Ye Clouds, athwart the billowy heaven ;
Swoop with black wings, and gird our home
In gloom no faintest beam hath riven :
Yet, e'en your ghostly shades are 'ware
Ye cannot dim our Christmas cheer.

V.

O Clouds and Tempest, Rain and Sleet—
Vain forms of elemental strife—
How can ye chill that subtest heat
Which warms and thrills to glorious life
All hearts, by cordial thoughts enticed
To bless, this day, the deathless Christ ?

And now, a noble and merry Christmas to you, "my masters!" Call to mind, I pray you, in the course of the 25th of December, not only that "the divinest heart that ever walked the earth was born upon that day, but that mirth also is of Heaven's making, and wondrous was the wine-drinking at Galilee!"

PAUL H. HAYNE.

* The statements in regard to this singular person are literally true.

Christmas Notes.

IN the Protestant districts of Germany and the north of Europe, Christmas is often called the "children's festival," and Christmas-eve is devoted to giving presents, especially between parents and children, and brothers and sisters, by means of the so-called Christmas-tree. A large yew-bough is erected in one of the parlors, lighted with tapers, and hung with manifold gifts, sweetmeats, apples, nuts, playthings, and ornaments. Each of these is marked with the name of the person for whom it is intended, but not with the name of the donor, and, when the whole family-party is assembled, the presents are distributed around the room according to their labels, amid joyful acclamations and congratulations. A more sober scene succeeds, for the mother takes this occasion to say privately to the daughter, and the father to the sons, what has been observed most praiseworthy and what most faulty in their conduct. Formerly, and still in some of the smaller villages of North Germany, the presents made by all the parents were sent to some one person, who, in high buskins, a white robe, a mask, and an enormous flax wig, becoming the bugbear of children, known as *Knecht Rupert*, goes from house to house, is received by the parents with great pomp and reverence, calls for the children, and bestows the intended gifts upon them according to the character which he hears from the parents after severe inquiries.

Christmas has always been at once a religious, domestic, and merry-making festival in England, equally for every rank and every age. The revels used to begin on Christmas-eve, and continued often till Candlemas (February 2d), every day being a holiday till Twelfth-night (January 6th). In the houses of the nobles a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of unreason," was appointed, whose office was "to make the rarest pastimes, to delight the beholder," and whose dominion lasted from All-hallow eve (October 31st) till Candlemas-day. The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar, and honey. The Italians have the following proverb: "He has more business than English ovens at Christmas." The tenants were entertained at the hall; and the lord of the manor and his family encouraged every art conducive to mirth.

The common custom of decking the houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from ancient Druid practices. It was an old belief that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain unnipped by frost till a milder season. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bay, laurel, and mistletoe, furnished the favorite trimmings, which were not removed till Candlemas. Chaplets of these were also worn about the head, a practice to which the phrases to "kiss under the rose," to "whisper under the mistletoe," are allusions. In old church-calendars Christmas-eve is marked: "Tempia exornantur" (adorn the temples). Holly and ivy still remain in England the most esteemed Christmas evergreens, though at the two universities the windows of the college-chapels are decked with laurel.

It is an old Swedish tradition, preserved in the history of Olaf, Archbishop of Upsal, that at the festival of Christmas the men living in the cold northern parts are suddenly and strangely metamorphosed into wolves; and that a huge multitude of them meet together at an appointed place during the night, and rage so fiercely against mankind and other creatures not fierce by nature, that the inhabitants of that country suffer more from their attacks than ever they do from natural wolves.

Among the revels of the Christmas season were the so-called feasts of fools and of asses, grotesque saturnalia, which were sometimes termed "December liberties," in which every thing serious was burlesqued, inferiors personifying their superiors, great men becoming frolicsome, and which illustrate the proneness of man to occasionally reverse the order of society and ridicule its decencies.

Preparatory to Christmas the bells are rung at dead midnight throughout England and the Continent; and, after the solemn celebration of the mass, for which the churches in France and Italy are magnificently adorned, it is usual for the revellers to partake of a collation, that they may be better able to sustain the fatigues of the night.

During the last days preceding Christmas it is still the custom for Calabrian minstrels to descend from the mountains to Naples and Rome, saluting the shrines of the Virgin Mother with their wild music under the poetical notion of cheering her until the birth-time of her infant at the approaching Christmas.

In a picture of the nativity by Raphael he has introduced a sheep herd at the door playing on a sort of bagpipe.



GRANDPAPA'S CHRISTMAS VISITORS.



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CICELY'S CHRISTMAS.



"A fruit-knife next fell a sacrifice, and two pairs of scissors were lamed for life."

THE queen-city, radiant with life, noisy with mirth and light, gay with decorations, and fragrant with spicy odors, sat enthroned on Manhattan Island, a great river on either hand, an ocean at her feet, and at her back a whole nation of tributary towns and villages ready to do her honor, and uphold her supremacy over the wide American Continent against all envious rivals. It was Christmas-eve, and the queen wore her holiday robes. New-fallen snow covered the pavements, evergreen trees made groves of the provision-stores, cone-laden boughs formed arbors over the long lines of plump turkeys, each bearing its sacrificial green sprig; graceful wreaths of running-pine clambered over the gift-books and framed the glowing paintings, laurel shone on the marble statuettes, holly gleamed among the jewels, and in the windows of the toy-shops stood royal Christmas-trees, glittering with lights and covered with glorified wonders so bewilderingly beautiful that the crowd of little faces outside was struck speechless with admiration. The sun was setting; with his ruddy face hidden by a bank of snow-clouds, he sent a flood of golden light over the house-tops and lit up all the western windows to do honor to Christmas-eve. This aerial illumination took the inhabitants of the queen-city by surprise. The day had been dark with thick-falling snow-flakes, and the night had come down rapidly, as though in answer to the wishes of all the waiting children on the island. Lights glittered in the crowded stores, and "Please, mamma, light the gas; it will make Christmas come quicker," had been pleaded in so many houses by earnest little voices, that mammas had yielded, and the chandeliers threw their light out over the snow through the curtained windows many minutes before the customary time, so that when King Sol sent up his fireworks, there was a double illumination all over the city.

But the gas could not rival the sky tints. First came the golden beams glittering against the windows, shining on the lofty roofs, and lighting up the gilt cross on St. Bont's slender spire until it shone

against the dark sky like a star. Then a vivid rose hue stole up to the zenith, and hurrying people paused to look at the warm light on the marble *façades* and the red glow over the snow. Dying off into a soft pink, the flush sank down to the west, dropping from cloud to cloud, and, fading away into the clear, pale yellow on the horizon, which, itself changing from yellow to purple, from purple to blue, and from blue to gray, gradually darkened into the sombre night.

Among the busy throng, two persons were walking side by side, apparently not themselves hurried, but forced to join in the quick pace of the moving crowd, sweeping up Broadway like an endless gala procession; round the corner to the left, the ranks still unbroken, past haughty windows wherein lay rich merchandise in careless heaps, and on to Aladdin's Palace, where gold, pearls, rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, were shining, shimmering, glowing, gleaming, and sparkling, on their white velvet beds.

"O Seth, let us go in for a moment!" exclaimed Cicely, her brown eyes as bright as the jewels she admired.

Tall Seth glanced over her head, scanned the display with an indifferent gaze, and answered:

"Do you really care for those stones, Cicely?"

"They are diamonds, Seth—real royal diamonds. See those rings, that necklace, and oh, see those fringed ear-rings! How they sparkle! They must be worth thousands of dollars," murmured Cicely, in tones of awe.

They entered the palace and joined the crowd of gazers around the glass cases, Cicely flushed with excited interest, and Seth looking with amused glances, not at the jewels, but at his pretty companion. After a tour among the wonders, they secured a place at the diamond-counter, where the shining gems, pure and self-radiant as liquid light, gladdened all hearts with their beauty. At least, so Cicely said, as she gazed, lost in an ecstasy of admiration.

"Those crosses, Seth, and that diamond bird! Look at the yellow

gleam of this *solitaire*, and see the white light in that pin. And, O Seth, some more fringed ear-rings, like those in the window, but even more beautiful, if that is possible;" and Cicely heaved a little sigh. Her companion stood beside her, but after a time these raptures fell upon an unlistening ear. Honest Seth had no eye for jewels, and his mind, full of engrossing thoughts, had wandered far from the scene, as he stood with one strong hand resting on the counter, lost in abstraction. So Cicely discovered him, as, after pursuing her monologue for some time, she withdrew her eyes from the treasures and looked up for a response.

Cicely Wild was charmingly pretty, with the dark shadows and ripe tints of brown beauty, a type as essentially peculiar as the blond, and so-called brunette. Brown eyes, brown hair, brown skin, and a round little figure, even Seth Austin, practical machinist as he was, expanded into poetry in her presence, calling her his dear little "nut-brown mayde." Poor and orphaned, well educated and energetic, the young girl belonged to the great army of teachers, and, bravely leaving the district-school on the hill and the lonely farmhouse in the valley, she had come to the great city, where, if the work was twice as hard, the pay was also doubled, and life ten times as bright to the active young mind. But little Cicely did not venture into the crowded metropolis entirely unfriended; the playmate of her childhood, the friend of her girlhood, and the lover of her maturer years, was there before her, working hard in the great Columbian Iron Works, where the wonderful engines of the ocean-steamer were formed, amid the noise of bewildering and ponderous machinery. Seth Austin, born and bred in the country town of Plum Valley, had educated himself, studied mechanics, journeyed to New York, and obtained a place in the Columbian Iron Works, no one exactly knew how; himself least of all. Some men are born with their calling written by the finger of Nature upon their brows. Most of us plod on in whatever vocation our parents or chance select for us, and we are lawyers, physicians, or merchants, as it may happen, without any strong or impudent preference on our part. But now and then Nature gives us a lesson in phrenology, sending a musician, a painter, or an inventor into the world, so plainly marked that he who runs may read. If the parents of the child of sounds are deaf to his capabilities and persist in making him a carpenter, how many hours will he steal from his uncongenial toil, trying to fashion rude pipes from the reeds by the river! If the parents of the child of hues are blind to his powers and persist in making him a baker, how will he slip away to mix his primitive colors; how will he make the fences his canvas, and paint the very loaves in the oven! Seth Austin was endowed with one of those rare brains in whose sight the principles and evolutions of machinery are clear as the sunlight. Having no one to interfere with the bent of his inclinations, he had migrated from the water-wheels and blacksmith-shop of Plum Valley to the Columbian Iron Works with the certainty of a needle pointing to its pole; and there, although occupied with hands and mind all day, he still found time at night to weave his own ideas and make his own experiments upon the great laws which, even in the nineteenth century, are not yet wholly understood. From his childhood he had loved Cicely Wild, the one love of his life, and never had his fancy so much as glanced in another direction from the days when they both attended the old red school on the hill, and shared their apples and gingerbread. Before he left the village he had won from the "nut-brown mayde" the promise to be his wife as soon as Fortune should smile even faintly upon him; and when, in one of his brief letters he suggested the idea of her coming to New York, the little school-mistress was eagerly glad to desert the quiet village, delighted with the gay city, proud of her new position in the thronged school, and happy in the frequent presence of her lover, albeit she found him, at times, strangely absent-minded.

But Cicely had come to the city in the early fall, and now that four months had passed in the daily routine of teaching, a dull fatigue had darkened her brain, weakened her body, and clouded her heart; her slender ankles ached with climbing endless stairs, her little wrists trembled under the weight of heavy books, and her mind grew wearied with the strict rules, equally severe for teacher as scholar. In the kindness of his heart, Seth had taken pains to find a home for the country girl in a fashionable boarding-house, where, perched in a skylight, six feet by nine, she was at liberty to fly down and eat at the same table with the Misses Van Airtop, lost in wonder over their magnificent and multitudinous costumes. Occasionally, the evenings

were brightened by a visit from Seth, but the young man's time was so fully occupied and his brain so filled with his own plans, that often for days he did not come, and sometimes, even when present in body, his mind would wander away to his models, as vexed little Cicely would soon discover, doing her best, too, poor child, to entertain him in a corner of the well-filled drawing-room. One Sunday evening, coming from church, she vouchsafed but curt answers and chill remarks, until a turn in the street brought the boarding-house into view; then, in a torrent, her vexation and unhappiness burst forth, and swept over the unsuspecting Seth in a storm of tearful words.

"You do not care for me; you do not love me any more! Why not be honest and say so? Sitting there evening after evening and hour after hour without saying one word! And, besides, you never come but once in two weeks, and never stay more than ten minutes when you do come. The other night, when I was speaking of Nilsson, you did not hear one word I said; and, when I asked you how old she was, you said 'about eighty, I believe,' and Miss Van Airtop laughed. It was all a mistake, my coming to New York. I wish I had stayed in Plum Valley. I wish I had never seen you, and I don't think I want to live any longer. I should like to die and be buried," sobbed the "nut-brown mayde," in doleful despair.

When the astonished Seth had recovered his breath, he burst forth in rapid phrases: "My own Cicely, is it possible such trifles have troubled you? Do you not see that my mind is hourly filled with plans to hasten the day when I can place you in a home of our own? All my thoughts, all my labors, are for you, dear, and your love is all I live for in the world! I do not care for conventional sentences uttered within the hearing of idle strangers, but I come to the house to look at my darling, and go away strengthened for the battle going on, day and night, between me and Fate. You can have no idea how hard is the contest; but it is all for the home, and the home, dear, is you."

Another week had passed, and Christmas was close at hand. The city was gay with holiday gifts and holiday people, and the very air seemed rich and hospitable. Cicely, full of excitement, laid her plans for the day with careful precision, altering them regularly every night before falling asleep, and writing spasmodic little notes to Seth every morning to inform him of the last important change in her programme. One evening, one precious evening, the two had the drawing-room all to themselves; the Van Airtops and retinue were at Booth's Theatre, the Deepdowner family had gone to the Philharmonic Concert, and the Misses Ecclesie were attending rehearsal at St.-Bonté's.

"Isn't this delightful?" exclaimed Cicely, as she danced into the room; "we are alone, you can stay all the evening, and I will show you my final programme for Christmas-day." They seated themselves, and the little lady had no cause to complain of an inattentive listener as she talked on happily for many minutes. At length, drawing a roll of paper from her pocket, she said: "This, Seth, is the programme. It begins at noon on Christmas-eve. Our holidays commence at exactly the same hour; isn't that delightful? — O Seth! how could you? Suppose Priscilla Ann should see you?"

"Would she crush me at one fell blow?"

"Nonsense, sir! But, really, you must be careful, for Priscilla Ann is an important person, and her ideas of propriety are stern as Plymouth Rock. Listen now to the

"PROGRAMME"

"For CHRISTMAS EVE.—Walk on Broadway from four to five; dine at the Silver Restaurant (lobster salad, omelette soufflé, Neapolitan cream, and plum-cake); attend the rehearsal at St.-Bonté's.

"For CHRISTMAS-DAY.—Meet at the corner at ten a.m. exactly; attend service at St.-Bonté's; lunch at the Golden Restaurant (*éclairs*, fruit and candies); in the afternoon the 'Pantomime' at Mallot's; dine at the Diamond Restaurant (*pâté de foie gras*, *meringue glacée*, and plum-pudding); in the evening attend Booth's Theatre, and buy a bouquet.

(Signed)

CICELY WILD."

"Excellent, excellent!" applauded Seth; "but could you not allow me a small portion of meat, and one or two potatoes, dear?"

"Never. For once, at least, you shall eat Elysian food. Sign your name, sir!"

"I must go, now," said the young man, as he traced a bold "Seth Austin" beside the delicate "Cicely Wild."

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"Only half-past eight," exclaimed Cicely, in a tone of grieved wonder; "and we so seldom have an evening alone together."

"Never mind, dear, it will all come right in the end. Indeed, I must go, for I have some work to do at the office; and, besides, my head is so filled with business that I should prove but a dull companion."

"Always engrossed with business! Always in a hurry! Always talking of things I cannot understand: eccentric pumps and throttling cranks—such mysteries!"

"No more mysterious than things cut goring, on a catering bias, are to me," answered Seth, smiling down on the vexed little upturned face. "Trust me, dear. I am full of anxiety to-night."

"Then stay, and let me smooth out the troubles," whispered Cicely, with a beseeching glance.

But Seth was not to be persuaded, although his blue eyes shone with affectionate solicitude as he said good-night. The door closed; he was gone.

Little Cicely sat alone in the drawing-room, nursing annoyance into anger, and mistaking wounded vanity for grief. Four months in the city had not left her unchanged, and her fresh beauty had attracted enough attention to disturb the even balance of her inexperienced fancy. Among others, Mr. Blanchard de Volage, a young gentleman living in the same house, had found time to notice the country girl, although ostensibly he belonged to the Van Airytop retinue. A few chance words on the stairs, a few chance conversations in the drawing-room, a few encounters in the street, expressive black eyes, a waxed mustache, and diamond studs, formed a fascinating vision in Cicely's eyes, and, as she mused, a step in the hall and a low voice behind betrayed the very presence of the vision. The conversation that ensued was more than pleasant to the disappointed little heart. Seth never spoke so gently, or sympathized so entirely with all her feelings and tastes; Mr. de Volage appreciated all her ideas, he understood her without the necessity of explanation, and his delicate, unspoken homage contrasted vividly with Seth's blunt ways. After all, a veil of mystery increases the charm of the fairest flower, and in a conversation with Mr. de Volage there was always something behind, something implied rather than disclosed, in short, something to be discovered. So thought Cicely two hours later, as, with flushed cheeks and bright eyes, she busied herself in the arrangement of her cell; the careful stowing away of every article was more of a necessity there than a virtue, for even a pin seemed to crowd the floor and hide the pattern of the carpet.

At last the happy hour arrived, and at four o'clock the day before Christmas, Cicely and Seth were walking up Broadway, the little cloud on the nut-brown mayde's brow having vanished in the joy of meeting. She talked as gayly and continuously as the canary-bird sings, and her companion, although somewhat grave, looked so happy and showed such tender affection in all his words, that Mr. de Volage's black eyes were altogether forgotten, and all went merry as the Christmas bells. After swaying about in the Broadway throng, they had drifted into Aladdin's Palace, where, as before described, Cicely was lost in the diamonds, and Seth in his own busy thoughts. As she glanced up at her abstracted companion, Miss Wild observed the dark face of Blanchard de Volage, at a little distance, examining a pair of fringed diamond ear-rings, with the air of a connoisseur. As Cicely returned his graceful bow, she pulled Seth's coat-sleeve, whispering impatiently:

"Do take me away from these jewels; they really make me unhappy."

Passing Mr. de Volage, she intuitively felt the prolonged stare with which he honored Mr. Austin, and never before had Seth's boots seemed so old, his hands so large, and his coat so unfashionable. Unconscious Seth, however, drew Cicely's arm cosily through his own as they reached the street, and asked gayly:

"So you liked the diamonds, dear?"

"Like is no word, Seth. Say, rather, admired, or coveted. Some body will wear these fringed ear-rings, I suppose?" And a deep sigh followed.

But the Silver Restaurant opened its doors, and in the new delight of ordering the dishes prescribed by the programme, Cicely grew amiable again, and the dinner was pronounced a delicious success. At least Miss Wild said so, and Seth obediently ate whatever she gave him, not even daring to refuse the large slice of plum-cake with which the feast closed. After paying tribute to the majestic being who presided over the table, they sallied forth into the clear, cold night, and,

crossing the avenue, entered the open door of St.-Bonté's, and sought refuge in a shadowed seat near a carved column. The body of the church was dimly lighted, but the chancel and choir shone brilliantly, as busy workers were placing heavy festoons of evergreen over the windows, twining the pulpits with delicate wreaths, and heaping the font with glowing hot-house flowers. Up in the shadows of the roof shone a bright star, and over the chancel arch, in letters of living green, these words appeared: "PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TOWARD MEN." In the corners stood young fir-trees, lifting their heads amid the oaken tracery, and, from arch to arch across the church, swung long wreaths of pine and hemlock, following closely the outlines of the architecture, and throwing out faint forest fragrance upon the warm air. Up and down the lights glanced, as the busy workers moved from place to place; more flowers came, and the open baskets stood at the chancel rail, heaped with lovely blossoms, like an offering from Nature to grace the festival.

"Is it not beautiful?" whispered Cicely.

"Yes; but not quite natural to a man brought up in New England; I cannot get over the idea that it is wrong."

"Wrong, Seth? Do you not remember, 'The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary.'"

After a time lights gleamed around the organ, and the members of the choir assembled in their places; the work of decoration still went on, and fitting work it seemed to accompany the grand outburst of the chanted words, "Behold I bring you good tidings, good tidings of great joy!" filling the empty aisles and resounding back from the lofty roof as though a choir of angels had reechoed the strain. Then single voice took up the tale, and, mounting higher and higher, seemed to soar to heaven itself on the silver wings of the melody, dying away softly on the listening ear, as the choir below burst out again into the rejoicing chorus. When the voices ceased, the organ sounded forth alone, now thrilling through the church in softest minor, now giving out heavy low chords that shook the air; now pealing a chime of Christmas bells, and ending with a strain of such seraphic sweetness that the tears came to the hearer's eyes.

"It is the celestial voice," whispered Cicely, as the sound died away and the choir began a hymn.

Soon the noise of bells mingled with the voices; the ringer, too, must have his rehearsal, and, up and down, back and forth, the swinging bells rang out their notes, telling to the city the glad tidings of great joy with all their silvery strength. At last the work was done, the last wreath adjusted, the last hymn sung, the last peal rung; the lights were extinguished, all but one, and, going out into the night, Cicely and her companion walked slowly homeward.

"Think of the old church being left there alone, with all her festal garments on," mused Cicely. "I wonder if the spirits do not come down, flit through the aisles, arrange the flowers, and even sound a few strains on the organ? Suppose that all the dead in the church-yard should come to life again on Christmas-eve, and hold a service of their own in the decorated church?"

"St.-Bonté's has no church-yard, little dreamer."

"It ought to have, then; don't spoil my illusions, Seth."

Ten o'clock, and the four-story brown front of Miss Rogers's boarding-house loomed before them.

"Come in for a moment," pleaded Cicely.

"I cannot, dear; I have something to do at the house—business-matters."

"Always business," thought Cicely; "on Christmas-eve at least it should be banished."

So she said "good-night" with an ill grace, and, entering the hall, glanced into the drawing-room on her way up-stairs. There stood Blanchard de Volage, and, as he hastened to meet her, a gleam of pleasure soothed her annoyance, and, shyly accepting a seat by the register, she listened to his honeyed phrases with complacent pleasure. In the course of conversation, Mr. de Volage discovered that Cicely had been listening to the rehearsal at St.-Bonté's.

"Ah, yes," he remarked, "very pretty little choir, I believe. For myself, I always attend old Methuselah's. There we have two choirs of boys, two hundred and fifty voices in each; six hundred tenors, and a thousand bassos. On Christmas-day, in addition to the four organs, we have as many brass bands. The effect is truly soul-inspiring—thrilling, and yet so soft. The congregation, too, is truly elegant; the very air is fragrant—incense wasted in from concealed gratings—

so aesthetic! Let me advise you to go there to-morrow, Miss Wild."

Some time afterward, in speaking of Christmas presents, Mr. de Volage said, meaningly:

"You admire diamonds, Miss Wild?"

Cicely confessed the admiration.

"Pretty stones, truly; and Aladdin has some fair specimens—that is, fair for America. The ear-rings especially are quite tasteful."

"Fringed?" inquired Cicely, eagerly.

"Ah, yes—as you say, fringed. For my part, I consider diamonds the only appropriate gift from a gentleman to a lady. Crystallized flowers, delicate trifles, more enduring than the real blossoms, fitting ornaments for flower-like faces. Did you notice any necklaces or tiaras that pleased your fancy, Miss Wild?"

"I was particularly attracted by the ear-rings."

"Ah, yes—as you say, ear-rings. A pendent gem from the shell-like ear of beauty no doubt enhances the starry gleam of the eyes. As Tennyson says—

"And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear."

I hope Tennyson is your favorite poet, Miss Wild?"

And so the conversation rippled on, in matter nothing, in manner much, until the sound of a carriage at the door roused Cicely to a realization of the hour.

"It is after eleven," she said, rising; "I must go," and, escaping up the staircase, she heard the voluminous rustle of Miss Van Airy-top's robes—Wilhelmina Van Airytop, the tall blonde with the aquiline nose and pale-blue eyes, whom she especially dreaded.

Christmas-morning and bright sunshine, with just enough clear crispness in the air to keep the snow from melting; could any one ask more? Little Cicely thought not, as she ran up-stairs after an early solitary breakfast, to prepare for the long day of pleasure opening in a rosy vista before her. A knock at the door announced the severe features of Priscilla Ann, with wiry hand below thrusting in a note. "The young man waits for an answer," said this grim damsel, eying with grave disapproval the drooping plume on Cicely's little hat.

But Miss Wild for once remained untouched by Priscilla's glances. With swelling heart she read the following lines, hastily written in pencil on a leaf torn from a note-book:

"DEAR CICELY: I am grieved to disappoint you, but unexpected business will detain me all day. Hope to see you this evening and bring good news. In haste, SETH."

From the rosy summit of hope, down dropped Cicely to the depths of angry despair. After a moment's hesitation, she wrote the following words in reply:

"MR. S. AUSTIN—DEAR SIR: After such a Christmas greeting, I feel disposed to express what has long been in my mind—we are not suited to each other! From henceforth, consider yourself free. Any thing you have to say had best be written. Farewell forever!"

"CICELY WILD."

After dispatching this fierce missive by the hand of the inflexible Priscilla, Cicely sat down to take breath. Anger flushed her cheeks, shone in her eyes, and beat rapidly in her pulses. A crowd of thoughts filled her mind, and wounded pride swelled her heart.

"After my long anticipation, my plans, and the open delight I manifested only last evening, to be so carelessly thrust aside!" she mused, with bitter feelings. "Seth has changed; there can be no doubt of that. For two months, at least, I have noticed how absent-minded and abstracted he was, evidently thinking of some one else! Who can it be? Not that it is of the slightest consequence to me, not the least; but, whoever she is, I hope she understands steam-engines, and takes pleasure in being trodden down to the very dust!"

As the last thought called up a vision to Cicely's mind, she rapidly transferred it to paper.

"Very tall shall you be, miss, and bony," said the nut-brown mayde, apostrophizing her unknown rival; "high-shouldered, leathery, and tough. A roman nose, my lady; spectacles, and a high, beetling forehead, with plenty of room for your steam-engine knowledge. Long, flat garters, lisle-thread gloves, a water-proof cloak, and an um-

rella, shall complete your outfit, my dear, and I hope you feel ready to be trodden down to the very dust."

Some time being required to finish this sketch, the first flush of anger subsided, and left an aching void; but dormant vanity awoke, and displayed a rose-colored vision, in whose vista cupids, perfumes, showers of diamonds, and the dark eyes of Blanchard de Volage, floated in bewildering confusion. Lost in contemplation, Cicely sat dreaming until the sound of bells aroused her to reality. Putting on the plumed hat, she tripped lightly down-stairs—one, two, three, four flights—and, opening the front door, stepped out into Christmas, the bells far and near pealing out for—

"Merry, merry Christmas!
Down through the crowded street,
While all the city chimes in ringing chorus,
The Gloria repeat."

"And sounding onward over hill and valley,
Buried beneath the snow,
The village spires take up the joyful story.
Echoing to and fro."

Cicely's feet did not turn toward St.-Bonté's, but, crossing the avenue, they carried her into a car; just standing-room for the two little soles and no more, while the fresh robes were crushed and the plumed hat knocked out of shape by a swaying, struggling crowd. A pull at the bell, the horses stop, and the wedged mass sways wildly from north to south as a female is pushed in from the rear platform. The hangers-on behind climb on again, and the horses struggle forward. Another pull, another stop, and the wedged mass sways from east to west as another female from the extreme forward end is crushed and hauled down the line, and handed out to the pavement in a collapsed condition. Cicely hoped that time would lighten the car, but the hope was vain. On they went, leaving residences behind them, jolting through narrow streets, rumbling along behind huge warehouses, plunging under dark archways, getting off the track at sharp corners; a crushed, cold, and wretched crowd, but still, always a crowd. Cicely had grown up with an implicit belief in the gallantry of the native-American white man, but this ride drove the delusion away forever.

"Oh, if I only had *Se*—somebody to hold me steady," she thought, as the car gave a sudden lurch.

But no "somebody" was there, and glad was she to escape when the car finally stopped, and let out its victims at Broadway. A hurried walk brought her to the door of old Methuselah. She entered, and behold—another crowd. Pews, aisles, gallery, chancel-steps, and vestibules, every inch occupied by a densely-packed throng, over whose shoulders she could not hope to look, even if she could have penetrated beyond the entrance. Away in the distance some voices were chanting, overhead sounded the roll of the great organ, but, with the exception of the back seams of two overcoats, Cicely saw nothing of old Methuselah's Christmas service; and after standing half an hour with frozen feet and aching head, she finally went out into the street again, and drearily considered the situation.

"Another car up-town, and lunch at the 'Golconda Ladies' Restaurant, as the 'Golden,' of course, is out of the question without *Se*—somebody as escort," suggested Reason.

Finding a return-car standing at the same corner, Cicely stepped inside, and, glad to obtain a seat after two hours on her feet, she sank thankfully into a corner and closed her eyes. As the car became filled, moisture from many breaths obscured the windows, and gradually a stern wall of overcoats darkened the space between the two sides. After a refreshing rest, Cicely opened her eyes, and, as the names of the streets hoarsely shouted by the conductor sounded strangely unfamiliar, she made an attempt to see through the dripping pane of glass behind her in the hope of recognizing the locality. But she could distinguish nothing, and, after some hesitation, she gently touched the nearest overcoat, murmuring: "If you please, sir, is this the route to Patroon Square?"

No answer, and the overcoat quite unconscious. At this moment, "Rip Van Dam Street," was heard from the door, and again Cicely attacked the overcoat. But she made no more impression than before, and presently, "Vander Donck Street" sounded in her ears. Applying both hands to the implacable overcoat, Cicely made another effort. The black wall swayed a little, but, taking firm hold of the strap, relapsed into stolidity again.

"Jan Joris Rapaelje Street!" shouted the hoarse voice, and Cicely,

growing desperate as the names grew longer, began beating a tattoo upon the overcoat with such force that it sprang around fiercely with—“What the—creation do you want, ma'am?” The angry tone and scowling brow terrified little Cicely so that she could scarcely gasp out her question, to which when asked the overcoat responded: “Patroon Square? Three miles from here; don't you know where you are going, ma'am?” Then, as Cicely rose and turned toward the door with an anxious look, the overcoat called loudly, “Woman here wants to get out,” at the same time settling comfortably down into the vacant seat, and opening a newspaper to prevent further conversation.

When at last Miss Wild succeeded in reaching the door, she ventured to ask how she could reach Patroon Square.

“Take fourth green car to Woutervantwiller Street, and connect with the Pauw Avenue line,” answered the hoarse voice, as a dozen hands lifted her down to the muddy pavement, and the car went on.

Cars were passing in rapid succession, and, selecting the fourth, Cicely stepped inside; as soon as the conductor approached, she asked if this was the route to Patroon Square.

“No!” growled the youth; “second track to the left,” and, pulling the bell, he stopped the car and handed her off.

“This must be the right one,” thought our bewildered heroine, as a car came in sight on the second track to the left. Again she asked her question, this time not venturing to get on board.

“Red car behind,” was the answer, and at last Cicely found herself in the right place, with plenty of time to discover how cold, tired, and hungry, the morning's excursion had left her, not to speak of the condition of her holiday attire. At last Woutervantwiller Street gave place to Pauw Avenue, and, as a shade of faintness stole over her, the familiar buildings of Patroon Square appeared, and on the right the welcome sign, “Golconda Ladies' Restaurant.” With eager step she approached and entered, to find only a sulky boy in possession, and the little tables covered with inhospitable baize.

“Can I have lunch here?” she asked.

“Restaurant ain't open Christmas-day.”

“Won't you be able to let me have a few oysters and some coffee?”

“Nothing on hand to-day but candies, mam.”

“A singular restaurant!”

“Most ladies lunch at home, or visits out, on Christmas-day; all but country folks, perhaps.”

Leaving the “Golconda” with all the dignity she could muster, the forlorn little maiden walked up the street in search of the “Koh-i-noor Dining-rooms for Ladies,” whose sign she had often read in happier hours. But the Koh-i-noor's brilliancy was also shrouded in baize, and the countenance of the young woman in charge betokened such lofty scorn that Cicely did not dare to propound her humble question, and, after purchasing a small amount of candy, she retreated in silent humility and resumed the hunt. At length, having walked several miles, she was rendered desperate by the pangs of hunger, and boldly resolved to enter the first restaurant, even although not exclusively for ladies. The “Grand Mogul” received her, as she timidly entered, with a prolonged stare, but made no objection to her seating herself at one of the tables, and after some delay a foreign waiter appeared, and calmly inspected his victim.

“Have you a bill of fare?” asked Cicely. The mogul, however, was too much occupied to reply. He twitched the cloth up, he twisted it down, he patted it on the right, he pulled it on the left, he moved the caster to all four points of the compass, falling back after each change to study the effect, and finally applied all his energy to polishing the mustard spoon, on a much-enduring napkin produced from the recesses of his pocket. “Have you a bill of fare?” ventured Cicely again. The mogul finished the spoon, admired its sheen, replaced it, yawned, and then remarked in a conversational tone:

“Did you speak, Miss?”

“Have you a bill of fare?” repeated the little customer.

“Oh, you mean the *carte*, I presume,” in an encouraging tone. “No, miss. On Christmas-day our guests are prepared to expect a certain fixed course suitable to the occasion, a *mélange* of dishes appropriate to the season.”

“What are they?” asked Cicely.

“Indeed, miss, it would be difficult to make you understand the names, being French; and, besides, it is one of our rules to surprise our guests on Christmas-day.”

“Bring me something, then, as soon as possible,” said Cicely, at

last, reduced to abject humility by the dignity of the mogul, and the pangs of hunger; “any thing will do.”

“Pardon me, but we never depart from our rules. You shall be served in due time, and with our regular course.”

And so it proved. Dish after dish was placed upon the table, each containing unknown compounds of dubious taste and uncertain odor, and, after Cicely had vainly attempted to eat them, the mogul would sweep them away and return with a fresh supply, spreading them out in martial array, and retiring a few steps to watch the effect. Having partially subdued her hunger with bread and potatoes, Cicely ventured to signify her desire for the bill. Mogul departed and came back with a portly document in which the guest was charged for ten courses, price ten dollars, and wished a “merry Christmas” by two corpulent cupids at the top.

“But I have only had five courses,” suggested Cicely.

“You are at liberty to have them all, miss—our regular *carte* for Christmas-day, miss; we never depart from our rules.”

Out in the street again with lightened purse, Cicely hesitated. Should she give it up and ignominiously beat a retreat? Never! There was the pantomime at Mallot's, designated in the original Christmas programme, and, signalling an omnibus, she journeyed down toward the enchanted realms where dwelt wonderful clowns, fairy columbines, and mysterious harlequins. As the performance had commenced, the vestibule was comparatively empty, and Cicely went up to the dungeon to buy her ticket.

“Reserved seat forward, three dollars,” said a voice within.

“I thought the price was a dollar and a half,” answered Cicely, standing on tiptoe to see the owner of the voice.

“Christmas-day, prices raised,” growled the man, and, giving the money in haste, Cicely shrank away, and opened the inner door. Here was a crowd beyond any thing she had yet seen, a dense mass of human beings of all ages. A band was playing, and shouts of laughter greeted the actors, who were entirely invisible to little Cicely, with a wall of overcoats towering above her head on all sides. Even a worm will turn when trampled upon, and as Cicely recovered her breath, after a hard push from a particularly disagreeable man who passed her rudely at the door, she caught the usher by the arm, and demanded her reserved seat with some asperity.

“Very sorry, miss; great crowd; Christmas-day, miss. Only three vacant seats left in front, obliged to charge a dollar extra for them.”

“But I have already paid an extra price for this ticket.”

“Very sorry, miss. Christmas-day. A dollar extra. Those are my orders.”

Determined, after so many disappointments, to enjoy at least a taste of holiday festivity, Cicely paid the required sum, and then began a series of hand-to-hand encounters with overcoats, as, following the usher, she wrestled her way through the throng. One very young gentleman of Hebrew descent accompanied her a portion of the way, and truly grateful was Miss Wild for his assistance; turning to thank him when she discovered the vacant seat near by, behold he was gone, but she had no time to regret his departure, as the glories of the stage met her eye, and soon forgot every thing but the fairy scene before her. In a few minutes a voice on the left murmured:

“Pretty, isn't it?”

“Beautiful,” answered Cicely, warmly, without removing her eyes from the stage.

“You don't hail from the city, I'll bet,” resumed the voice; “I know that by your fresh color.”

Startled by this remark, Miss Wild turned her head, and encountered the admiring gaze of a precocious youth of perhaps fifteen summers. Turning her back upon this aspiring Lothario, Cicely's attention was again fixed upon the stage, when a voice on the left began:

“Fair unknown, why so pensive?”

This time the offender was a rotund gentleman of mature age, and Cicely, somewhat alarmed, returned no answer, but looked steadily toward the stage. “Offended?” resumed the voice; “charming unknown, deign to glance with pity upon an humble admirer.” At this petition, Cicely rose from her seat and looked back over the sea of faces; no usher was in sight, but, preferring a stormy passage to the presence of the humble admirer, she boldly made her way into the aisle, and after many perils arrived at the vestibule, where, encountering the usher, she made a formal complaint. “Very sorry, miss; Christmas-day; impossible to keep order; great crowd,”

responded the usher, in polite jerks. But Cicely was not appeased. "It is disgraceful!" she exclaimed with withering emphasis. "Very sorry, miss; Christmas-day; most ladies has gentlemen with them in such a crowd," retorted the usher.

Out in the street again, Miss Wild walking rapidly up-town; the sky had grown dark, and a raw east wind swept through the city. What next? A firm resolve to go somewhere and do something filled her mind, and, remembering the painted notice "Open Daily" over the Mottled Alhambra, she turned her steps toward its classic walls, only to find on the pre-Raphaelite doors the following inscription: "Closed on Christmas-day." Crossing the city to another abode of art, she encountered on the threshold the pleasant welcome, "Gallery closed; Christmas-day." Standing at the inhospitable door, Cicely glanced up and down the broad street; already the shadows of twilight darkened the sidewalks, and the east wind swept all before him. With dreary resignation she signalled an omnibus, and, slipping into the only vacant seat, felt in her pocket for her purse. Alas, it was gone! Like a vision of the night, the face of the gallant young Hebrew rose in Cicely's mind. What should she do? Better get out as quick as possible before called upon for fare. Left again in the darkening street, Cicely hurried homeward, chilled and hungry, starting at every shadow, dreading every step coming up behind, and grieving over her lost money. At length the narrow lofty front, under whose roof-tree our weary bird had her perch, came into view, and, in response to Cicely's ring, the severely proper Priscilla Ann opened the door.

"Oh, it's you, Miss Wild, is it? I thought you intended to dine out to-day. I know Miss Rogers thought so, for she said all the boarders was out, and there'd be no dinner to get. So there's nobody at home but me, and I've got company in the kitchen."

"It's of no consequence, Priscilla Ann," said Cicely; "I shall do very well; I lunched heartily—my plans were unexpectedly altered. I—"

But Priscilla was gone, and Cicely commenced the long ascent to her perch, wishing she was in reality a bird, that wings might save her weary feet. Arrived at last, she found the fire out; the heartless little stove was cold as a stone. Divesting herself of her holiday attire, she plunged into its black depths, and, with soot on her nose and grimy hands, began laying the foundations anew with the utmost care, for well she knew the perfidiousness of the little imp, kindling with brilliant haste, and then going out without the slightest provocation. Needing more coal, Cicely stepped into the hall, when, as she reached the coal-box, the sound of the opposite door sent her flying into a closet, from whose dark depths she had the pleasure of beholding Mr. Blanchard de Volage, exquisitely dressed, coming out of his room and descending the stairs, humming an opera air as he went. The closing door, four flights below, told of his departure. "I wonder where he has gone?" thought Cicely, as she went back with her coal; "to-morrow morning I shall certainly begin to encourage him. Heretofore I have parried his advances, but now I am free, and can do as I please."

The fire well started, the next thought was dinner. The early breakfast, and the intangible lunch of the Great Mogul, had left an aching void behind. Priscilla Ann must on no account be disturbed, and the approaching darkness forbade any extended foraging expedition; but, remembering a little family supply-store around the corner, Cicely donned her old cloak and hat, and, stealing down the stairs, sallied forth for her small supplies. But the supply-store was closed, no doubt on account of "Christmas-day," and wandering on, block after block, she at length found a brilliantly-lighted shop, where she made her little purchases, with a crushing sense of their insignificance as compared with the grandeur of the magnate who measured them out. Having obtained from this dignitary a quarter-pound of coffee, the same of sugar, a loaf of bread, a can of oysters, and a small tin pail, to serve as coffee-pot, Cicely got into a car, and seated herself with her arms encumbered with brown-paper parcels. By this time it was quite dark, and she was anxiously waiting for the familiar corner of X—Street, when the car stopped; there was a block in front, two cars off the track, and a carriage overturned at the cross-street. Sitting there patiently holding her bundles, Cicely looked out through the glass at the line of stationary vehicles alongside. Presently there was a movement, then another stop, and this time an elegant carriage met her gaze, so close that the faces of the occupants were distinctly

visible in the glare of the adjoining street-lamp. The tin pail dropped at her feet, and the oysters followed, as she recognized Blanchard de Volage and Miss Van Airtop, the very Wilhemina whose aquiline nose and pale-blue eyes were her especial aversion. With a fixed gaze, Cicely watched the smiles, glances, and gay conversation, within the carriage, a Christmas pantomime, indeed, although not the one she had planned. Evidently an intimate relation existed between the two; and Blanchard's eyes, oh, perfidy! rested upon his companion with the same expression, the very identical devotion, which Cicely had so often seen beaming upon herself. At this point, Miss Van Airtop archly shook her blond ringlets, and something flashed. What was it? Could it be? It was! The very pair of fringed diamond ear-rings she had seen at Aladdin's Palace, in Blanchard's hand. The carriage moved on, and all the bundles fell to the floor, as Miss Wild sought for her handkerchief and furtively wiped her eyes.

Wearily ringing the bell, Cicely endured, as well as she could, the impatient glance of Priscilla Ann and her inquisitive comment. "Well, now, Miss Wild, if it ain't you again! And with all them bundles, too!" Climbing the stairs, she unlocked her cell-door and entered; the fire was out, of course, and no more kindling left in the box. Another encounter with Priscilla Ann was clearly impossible, and, after a reckless sacrifice of all her letter-paper and a pamphlet novel, the sullen little stove consented to blaze, and hope revived. Filling the tin pail with water from the pitcher, Cicely removed the cover and endeavored to insert the *impromptu* coffee-pot into the top of the stove; but a puff of smoke repelled her, and the pail was left to thaw on the outside, while the oyster-can was attacked with a penknife. Two jerks and a wrench, one blade broken; two more jerks, another gone. A fruit-knife next fell a sacrifice, and two pairs of scissors were lamed for life, but the oyster-can remained unharmed. Some book recommended a red-hot poker, but when, after much labor, the poker was heated, it refused to burn any thing but Cicely's arm, where a fragment of merino and a portion of skin responded gayly to the melting touch.

Binding up the smarting wrist as well as she could, Cicely gave up the oysters, and sat down to wait for the water to boil. Six, half-past, and seven, sounded from St. Bonté's slender spire, and still that water continued mildly tepid; at last the famished little school-mistress poured in the coffee, and, after a gentle simmer, drank the mixture, with the accompanying delicacy of dry bread. It was not good. Even the Marchioness, with her "make believe very much," could not have relished it. Sitting on the floor, with begrimed face and smarting wrist, Cicely caught sight of her rival, the sketch of the morning. Snatching it from the table, she flung it into the fire and watched it burn with gloomy satisfaction; then, as the remembrance of the angry words she had written to Seth came over her, she laid her tired head on a chair and burst into tears.

A knock at the door aroused her, and, unlocking it, Priscilla's voice was heard.

"A young man to see you, Miss Wild; Mr. Austin, I believe." Down-stairs flew Cicely, just as she was, nor paused until a pair of strong arms received her in the deserted drawing-room.

Seth seemed much excited, for, without noticing her appearance, or commenting upon her angry note, he exclaimed: "I have perfected my invention, Cicely, the firm have examined it, it is to be patented, and I am a partner from this date! What do you say to that for a Christmas present, darling?"

The great tidings proved only sober truth; the absent-minded, engrossed inventor had reaped the fruits of his hard brain-work, and a bright future opened before him.

"I kept it all a secret, for I wanted to surprise you, and spare you the anxiety of suspense," he said, after the first eager questions and answers. "I spoiled your Christmas, dear, but here is a trifle to make you forget all about it."

The trifle was a box containing a pair of fringed diamond ear-rings, more superb than any Cicely had seen.

"O Seth! And I have nothing to give you," said the "nut-brown mayde," with tearful eyes, and a heart full of repentance.

"You know something to give me, Cicely, and I am come to beg for it. You can give me a dear little wife. See! I take her, in spite of herself; and who shall say this is not, after all, a merry Christmas?"

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

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TABLE-TALK.

A YEAR ago, we indulged with the reader in a reverie before a Christmas fire, tracing a few sad and a few pleasant pictures in the blaze, and asking, at the close, "What shall we see in the coals when, as another Christmas comes round, we drop into a reverie before its animating blaze? What deaths and calamities shall we mourn? What new disappointments shall cast their shadows upon the coals? What peace shall we celebrate? What new hopes shall give brilliancy and glory to the pictures in the blaze?" The shadows which at that time fell upon the blaze were of war, and of the death of him whose name is for all time associated with Christmas-eve. No author or poet profoundly identified with our pleasures or our sentiments has been added this year to the long list of names entered upon the records of the dead. New wars have sprung up since our former Christmas reverie, and terrible slaughter has drenched with blood the fairest city of the world, but peace has disbanded the cohorts and scattered the implements of strife and insurrection. There is many and many a gap in Christmas circles, but peace restored gives hope for the future, and the laurel that is hung upon the graves of the heroes affords consolation for the past. In our own land the calamities that we mourn are darkened with no human guilt or passion. Since last Christmas one great city has been nearly extinguished in flames, but all the lasting associations of the great calamity are of abounding good-will, of profound charity and sympathy, and no misfortune that creates or stimulates these high qualities can cast a shadow upon a Christmas blaze. We may regret the great loss of property, the serious injury done to material interests in all parts of the country, and we may heartily sympathize with those cast down from affluence; but love, and tenderness, and human brotherhood, in the spirit of Christmas, transcend the value of wealth, and hence, as we look into the Christmas coals for a just reflection of the events we muse upon, the Chicago misfortune, we discover, casts not a shadow, but a great beauty, and proclaims better than has been proclaimed for long years the supreme bond of human sympathy. But, of course, we remember that many a hearth that was the pride of its happy circle a year ago is now only a ruin, and that there remain those who still need the kindly aid of the world's charity. Christmas-time, if it exalts the Christian spirit with which mankind responded to Chicago's great need, should also freshen the sympathy that prompted the great outpouring. The pictures that come before us of the Western forest-fires are more terrible. We discover the same features of a world-wide sympathy for the sufferers, but the suffering has elements of such profound tragedy that the heart sickens in the contemplation of it. In many instances the wide destruction that engulfed both homes and their occupants left only a blank for the world's sympathy to mourn over. In others a few survivors might, in the general commiseration, receive protection from immediate want; but where was

there a charity that could restore wife, children, parents, left graveless in the charred and blackened towns? Keen, indeed, should be the sympathies that these pictures awaken in our retrospective reverie, and earnest the hope that, ere another Christmas comes round, the scars and wounds that now so painfully attest the recent calamity will, in part at least, have been healed. We have these melancholy pictures of the year's history to contemplate, but we have no humiliating ones. We were prompt to show our charity for suffering, and we have made war upon corruption; even while doing kindly things for the unfortunate, we have cast down guilt from high places. Our year has been full of large events—of war, siege, insurrection, but it closes in peace, and the future gives no threat of immediate disturbance. We may watch the pictures in the fire with many a touch of sadness, but also with the serene hope of a happy year to come. Misfortunes little dreamed of may, it is true, lie in wait for us, but the Christmas fire gives no augury of ill.

— Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke is a young baronet, wealthy, of unquestioned ability, the proprietor and editor of that most respected of English literary authorities, the *Athenaeum*, and M. P. for the important suburban borough of Chelsea. The hopes of the "dynastic" liberals were just getting very high regarding his prospective usefulness to that party, when of a sudden he has bloomed out into rampant and defiant republicanism. He has been making addresses in various large English towns on subjects so delicate as the expensiveness of royalty, the decrepitude of the House of Lords, and the advantages of a republic, in the course of which he has made more than one serious charge against the royal family and the ministers. That such revolutionary fire should proceed from a man of title, position, and wealth, at first strikes one as eccentric. But a brief glance over the pages of history convinces us that few things are more common than to see the high-born—even princes of the blood royal—taking the lead in insurrections and revolutions, and deserting their own class, where they have many equals, to be the chief of a lower, where they stand above and alone. In the present democratic agitation in England, more than one peer of the realm is known to sympathize with that cause; while the first man to suggest in public a resistance to the succession of the Prince of Wales, in case of the queen's death, was the Hon. Curbérion Herbert, a scion of the ancient and powerful house of Herbert, and a brother of the Tory Earl of Carnarvon. In Cromwell's time, we need only remember the Earl of Essex and Lord Fairfax; in that of the Restoration, Algernon Sydney and Lord William Russell; the Earl Stanhope, who lived at the beginning of this century, was republican in his propensities; Charles James Fox, son of Lord Holland, used to wear buff and blue, the colors of rebelliously democratic America, on the hustings of Westminster at election-time, and at one time was certainly verging on democracy; Sir Francis Burdett and Lord John Russell were, during the regency, at least very radical liberals, and not less so

was Sir John Cam Hobhouse, afterward Lord Broughton; while Lord Byron—who was, indeed, an exception to all rules—was a democrat often in speech, if not at heart. In France, the *nobless* have always been prominent, even in the reddest and hottest of the revolutions. Mirabeau was the son of a marquis, and Philippe Egalité the great-grandson of a king; and in the Constituent and the National Assembly might have been found many of the noblest names in France. No doubt, in many cases, this tendency of aristocrats is owing to the fact that they would "rather be the head of a mouse than the tail of a lion;" and see their way to power, as leaders of the mob, which they could not attain as one of the rank and file of a select caste. Others have a taste for doing unexpected things, and thus acquiring notoriety; while yet others have a true enthusiasm and patriotic fervor, perceiving more clearly, from their position, the shams and outrages and corruptions of government, and self-forgetful enough to abandon their privileges in order to engage in a crusade against these evils.

— Three remarkable movements (if any thing may be called remarkable in this age) in the religious world are worth noting. The first, which may with more appositeness be called an anti-religious movement, is the avowed determination of the freethinkers of this country to assume an aggressive attitude, to "carry the war into Africa," instead of acting on the defensive, as they have hitherto done. At a late meeting in this city, it was resolved to advocate and to promulgate free-thinking doctrines throughout the United States by the use of means similar to those employed by religious denominations to gain converts. Clubs are to be organized, lectures to be provided for, newspapers and tracts to be published, and *coporteurs* to be sent abroad. What these gentlemen hope to gain, besides notoriety, by the projected crusade, does not appear, nor are we informed whence they expect to derive the "sinews of war." Another movement which we have to chronicle, and which is an unmistakably religious one, will attract more general interest. It is proposed to build a Protestant church, one worthy of the name, in Rome, within the very shadow of the Vatican. This project is chiefly noticeable from the fact that, in accordance with the policy of the Papal Government, no public place of worship has ever been permitted to Protestants within the walls of the Eternal City; and the building of a church has become possible only since Rome was made the capital of united Italy. A meeting in furtherance of the object was held lately in Brooklyn, and it is proposed to collect subscriptions at once, so as to insure its early realization. While Protestants are thus preparing to enter the stronghold of the papacy, the Roman Catholic Church is quietly consummating a scheme which may lead to far more important results. This is no less than a systematic effort to convert to the Roman Catholic faith the entire negro population of the United States. The month of November witnessed the departure from England of four priests, Reverend Fathers Dowling, Gore, Noonan, and Vigeront, who are but the precursors of a larger company,

bound by a solemn vow to devote their lives to this special work. They are sent out from the Foreign Mission College of St. Joseph, an English institution of but a few years' growth, and they are the first that have ever left its walls. Their destination is Maryland, where, more than two centuries ago, the priests who landed with Lord Baltimore undertook a similar mission—that of Christianizing the Indians. Archbishop Manning, in his address to the priests before their departure, remarked that this was "the first Catholic foreign mission ever dispatched from the shores of England;" and it was most appropriately the first, because it was a special mission to five million negroes in the United States, who a short time ago were released from the yoke of slavery which England had imposed on their forefathers. "England," he said, "had been the most guilty of all nations in regard to slavery, and therefore it was fitting that the reparation to the negro should proceed from England." The Archbishop of Baltimore has given a house and grounds for the use of the mission. The result of this singular enterprise will be looked for with interest. Whether we as a people have done our whole duty by those who were lately our bond-servants, is a question to be decided by our own consciences; but none will deny that there is still room for missionary work among them.

— Berlin, in the midst of her flush of warlike triumph, has found time to pay a long-delayed need of homage to a son of Germany who was a conqueror in the pacific art of poesy. A noble marble statue of Friedrich Schiller, who was the morning-star of German, as Chaucer of English song, was inaugurated at the imperial capital a few weeks ago, with an enthusiasm only less than that which welcomed the victorious Von Moltke and the shrewd, planning Bismarck from before Paris. And it was perhaps fitting that such a celebration should succeed that of a great military victory over the French. Schiller was the first of Germany's great national poets, and did more than any other to emancipate his native land from its literary slavery to Voltaire and other French models. Goethe was more a poet of the world, a songster for mankind; Schiller touched especially and peculiarly the Teuton heart, and, by his "Robbers," set Germany ablaze with wonder and delight. His succeeding poems built up and established a new school of German poetry which was of pure German essence; thus it is that while Goethe is now and always a Jove-like figure in the German mind, awful and revered, Schiller is hugged to the German heart, and loved and made a universal friend. Schiller was of humble birth; his father was a landscape-gardener, his mother a baker's daughter; but both these parents were people of piety and taste; the mother "loved poetry;" the father prayed for "boundless light" to be shed on the son's soul. Schiller, at the Academy of Stuttgart, was restless under the narrow trammels of the sleepy old drones who presided here, broke loose from their chafing traces, took the German heart by storm with "The Robbers," then produced, in quick succession, "Fiesco," "Don Carlos," "Maria Stuart," and, greatest of all, "Wallenstein."

When Crabb Robinson saw him at Weimar, in 1801, where he and Goethe were managing the Ducal Theatre, he "had a wild expression and a sickly look," and his manners were those of one who is not at ease. There was in him a mixture of the wildness of genius and the awkwardness of the student. His features were large and irregular. "What a contrast to the splendid physical beauty and Olympian repose of Goethe!" Schiller, like Goethe, Wieland, and Von Kotzebue, earned his living by his pen. He had always the appearance of sickness, and his wife and sister seemed to be ever watching over him with anxious solicitude. "The admiration excited by Schiller," says Robinson, "was mixed with love and pity." He lived retired, and most often wrote at midnight, drinking a great deal of coffee as a stimulant. When he died, in 1805, in the forty-second year of his age, a great gloom overspread Germany. That Goethe survived, scarcely seemed any consolation for the loss of the darling poet of the people's heart. He was buried quietly at Weimar, on a rainy night, without any address or other ceremony, as simply as any village babe might be laid in its last resting-place. And Germany, nearly threescore-and-ten years after, exults no less in the possession of his fame than of the triumphs which have brought his countrymen into that unity which has so long been their aspiration.

— Originality in criticism is quite as rare as originality in any other form of literature. Nearly all of our newspaper notices of new books are but stereotyped repetitions of a few convenient phrases of praise or censure. Now and then, however, we find that a pen, with brains behind it, has really been at work on a newspaper notice. Here, for instance, is a specimen of what we mean from that excellent journal, the *Christian Union*, edited by Henry Ward Beecher. It begins a notice of "Morton House" by saying that, though a genuine American work, it is as interesting as the better average of English novels. And it explains this general superiority of English novels over the general run of our own by saying that they all have, or rather the better class have, "that indescribable something, that air, that finish, which is as highly regarded in the circulating library as good blood and good breeding are in our social circles. This subtle power can be imitated, and we have plenty of imitations. But the genuine essence is only possible to genius, and 'Morton House' proves to us that at last we have a writer who understands her public, and who works not to show how brilliant she can be, but simply to produce that literary article which is most acceptable in the regular market. The story is located in the South: yet there is not a word of glorification of lost institutions or lost causes. This species of rubbish is simply brushed one side, and we have society as it is—not a brawling debating club, but an assemblage of individuals concerned in the ordinary ways of life. The plot serves; is thoroughly sensational, and yet tolerably reasonable. The characterizations are good—the conversation is excellent. Above all, the tone is healthy and unostentatiously American. For the sake of our literature, we trust that the author will not

pause in her new career, which certainly opens with the bravest promise." Here, in a few words, the *Christian Union* has detected the object and disclosed the character of "Morton House," the great merit and charm of which are its truthfulness and its healthy American tone.

— The demonstrations of popular favor with which the Russian Grand-duke Alexis has been received in the principal cities of the United States, indicate a singular change in the temper of our people. The new generation is evidently more tolerant than its fathers, and less fanatical in its democracy. Forty years ago the feeling was very strong among Americans that there was an irreconcileable antagonism between the republic and the despots of the Old World, who were popularly supposed to be always plotting its destruction. A somewhat fierce assertion of our peculiar ideas on government was deemed an essential manifestation of the spirit of patriotism. Russia at that time was particularly odious, in consequence of the Polish insurrection of 1830, with which our people generally sympathized strongly, and Russian tyranny and Russian cruelty formed the staples of newspaper articles, and were the favorite themes of popular orators. "Warsaw's last champion," and the wrongs and sufferings of Poland, as rehearsed in Campbell's sounding verse, were on the lips of every school-boy, and still, we believe, hold a conspicuous place in the books of declamation. But their meaning appears to be forgotten, and Kosciusko and his country have passed from the public mind. Russia is our very good friend, and no one cares for the antagonism between her institutions and ours. Her representative, in the person of a son of the czar, is received with an outburst of popular enthusiasm, and with all the honors that we know how to pay to our most distinguished favorites. The obvious moral, as we said before, is that we have grown tolerant, and, feeling secure in the strength of the republic, do not consider nor care whether or not the despots are conspiring against her, nor deem it necessary to hurl democratic defiance at them any longer. There is, in fact, much more good feeling among us toward despotic Russia than toward liberal England or democratic France, for the very sufficient reason that Russia has always been friendly to us, while both France and England have, from time to time, exhibited toward us jealousy and dislike, and have sought to profit by our real or supposed misfortunes.

Miscellany.

A Few Broadway Dealers.

AT Christmas-time the shops put on a new brilliancy and animation, and a visit to some of them is as entertaining as an hour at a museum. The superb fur establishment of Messrs. Gunther & Sons, in Broadway, is not only alluring in the way of beauty, but marvelously captivating in the comfort which its cold-excluding articles suggest. Handsome furs are seductive things, and at the Messrs. Gunther's may always be seen many rare skins, as rarely fashioned into graceful and charming forms.

Of the variety exhibited there seems no end. Each visitor will, of course, have his—perhaps we should say her—taste, but, for ourselves, give us, for genuine beauty, a set of silver fox. The great reputation of this house assures the purchaser that whatever he selects is honestly what it is represented to be.

From furs we may go naturally to jewels, and Tiffany's grand palace affords a display that dazzles the eyes, and, no doubt, often grieves the heart. It is not in human nature to see diamonds, and emeralds, and pearls, and rubies, and gold, chased and moulded into exquisite forms, and not profoundly covet their possession. While the ladies wander fascinated among the long cases of marvellous jewels, of diamonds abundant enough to purchase the ransom of every king in Christendom, and of other jewels set forth in array that overcomes the spectator with special wonder, let the gentlemen examine the superb bronzes, and other articles of taste gathered here, and admire them to the measure of their full aesthetic value.

Of those vast establishments erected by A. T. Stewart & Co. and Lord & Taylor, in honor of silk and cotton fabrics, all the world is familiar. They are spacious, to an extent exceeding all rivals, even in the largest of the European cities, and they are filled with fabrics brought from the remotest quarters of the globe, and exhibiting the best skill of all peoples in this branch of effort.

Broadway is crowded with stores of all kinds and of every degree of attraction. Among many that have special claims upon the affection of men, is that of Union Adams & Co., where, whoever has an artistic appreciation of a well-fitting shirt or a handsome necktie, can select from an ample stock the best goods in this line of wear. The houses we have mentioned stand each at the head of the trade it represents.

A Talk with Thomas Carlyle.

"April, 1869.

"Found Carlyle sitting in dressing-gown and slippers looking over the proofs of his 'Frederick the Great,' Mrs. Carlyle sitting on the sofa by the fire. After a while the conversation fell upon Prussia. Carlyle said the Prussians were full of intelligence and activity. There were energy and perseverance in their character—there was much resemblance to the English. If they did not do something, there was little hope for Germany. Elsewhere in Germany he could see little else than talk, and noise, and wretched radicalism. The king, he thought, was right, if, as he (Carlyle) believed, he meant to have no one but himself meddling in the affairs of the army, for that was and ever had been in Prussia the reliable, honorable body which has done every thing for Prussia. If its affairs were to be talked over and specified about by a parliament, there would soon be an end of this. The army would soon be as inefficient as the English was, with its Balaclava and its General Burgoyne, etc. He had seen nothing elsewhere that impressed him as the conversation with one or two (not more) Prussian officers had done. From these two he judged all the army. From what he saw in a week or two, while travelling, of the common soldiers, he judged of all the men. He said there was, he believed, no other army like it: neither English, nor French, nor any other. The officers were well educated and with a high sense of honor; the men filled with a sense of duty. Ours, with our newspaper rant about British pluck, was nothing to it. Our officers knew nothing—absolutely nothing. Some few might, by a common-

sense view of things, get a sort of routine of their business, but there was and had been for the last hundred and fifty years, wretched ignorance and inefficiency. . . . He abused parliaments, and the talk, and rant, and speechifying, and the publication of the same in the newspapers; laughed at what the press and the public had said about the soldiers' dress. They abused the stock! Why, a stock was most comfortable; the best neck-covering a soldier could wear. He always wore a stock. He, on his part, did not see why soldiers were not to wear stocks. He resented indignantly the interference of the press in such matters. . . . Parliament, the press, the English army, he abused royally, but in language so quaint, so droll, so unlike any thing I ever heard before, that once or twice I burst out laughing, though it was evident he saw nothing humorous or out of the way in his expressions. One thing was evident—his detestation of any and every thing approaching dishonesty or inconsistency; another, was his honest appreciation of conscientious work, not work slurred over to serve a purpose irrespective of time. He is full of humor, but he does not seem to know it is humor, for he goes on gravely, as though the humorous thoughts were mere strict reasoning. F— told me, going home, that another time he might probably take the opposite side, and abuse uncontrollable authority as much as he had done constitutional government."

The Black-Sea Canal.

There seems to be no limit to the capabilities of modern engineering. The present generation, which has witnessed the laying of the Atlantic cables and the opening of the Suez Canal, the Pacific Railway, and the Mont-Cenis Tunnel, will probably see trains of cars running under the Straits of Dover. It is reported that the Khédive of Egypt has begun the construction of a railway to connect Lower with Upper Egypt, which, considering the difficulties to be overcome, is almost as great an undertaking as was the building of our highway to the Pacific. And now comes the rumor that the Russian Government is seriously discussing the question of carrying into execution a favorite project of Peter the Great's—the union of the waters of the Caspian and the Black Seas by a ship-canal. M. Edward Blum, a German topographer in the Russian service, has made a thorough survey of the intervening country, and is of opinion that it once formed a part of the bed of the two seas in question, which, in prehistoric times, composed but one sheet of water. This was the belief of the ancients. The geological indications are, that the Black-Sea formerly had no connection with the Mediterranean, that its waters covered a considerable portion of Southern Russia, and that some great convulsion of Nature threw up the barrier between it and the Caspian, and opened its outlet into the Mediterranean. The Caspian Sea, whose waters are brackish, has no outlet, the immense volume of water poured into it by the Volga and other large rivers passing off wholly by evaporation. In Peter the Great's time, officers were employed on it for three years in making surveys and charts. Other surveys made by the Russian Government in 1856-'57, show that its level is eighty-four feet lower than that of the Black Sea. The proposed canal, which will be three hundred and seventy English miles in length, will follow the course of the Don for forty miles, and then pass to the Caspian through the great plain of Kuman-Manitz. M. Blum estimates the cost of this gigantic work, which will require six years for

construction, at about eighty-one million dollars, or nineteen million dollars less than the cost of the Suez Canal. It will be of immense benefit to Russia, both in a commercial and a military point of view.

Marine Flora.

The marine flora, properly so called, consists almost entirely of sea-weeds, of which about two thousand species are known, growing in marshes, lakes, streams, and seas. Nor are they confined within these boundaries, for physiologists recognize them as parasites growing on insects, worms, fishes, in the internal tissues of ruminants, and even in the eyes of man, his tongue, and his throat. They present the greatest variety of form. Some are simple, elongated filaments, others have an appearance of membrane, striking out from a long stem; sometimes we say they are like parchment, or India-rubber; now as transparent balloons, or gophered stuff, trembling jelly, or horn shavings, bands of tanned skin, or fans of green paper. The most curious forms are to be found in this fantastic world. Nor are the colors less various—black, olive, yellow, green, carmine; the brown being the commonest, the red lying beneath the water, the green at the surface. They have no fibres, vessels, or circulation—nothing but the first vegetable element, the cell; and what might be called the root is not of use to nourish the plant, but simply to maintain it in its place. Yet there are some indications of an approach to animal life, as in the corallines, which have the singular power of incrusting themselves with carbonate of chalk, like the shell-fish, and also in their rapid decomposition, when the disagreeable odor recalls that of animal matter in a state of putrefaction.

Kit Carson's Ride.

A Southern Oregon paper thus criticises Joaquin Miller's "Kit Carson's Ride": "Now Kit Carson would never have attempted to run a race of forty miles with a prairie-fire, even if 'old Revels' was fool enough to advise him to do so. Why, the young squaw would have had more sense than that! Kit Carson, instead of throwing away his weapons and stripping himself naked, would have quietly kindled a fire in the grass, which would have made a safe track for his advance to the Brazos over the burnt territory—the herd of wild animals behind would have obliterated the trail, and the pursuing Indians would have been thrown off the pursuit. Carson's fame rests on his skill and experience in all the vicissitudes and exigencies of a border life; and a poem, avowedly intended to perpetuate it, should have some incidents tending to illustrate that skill under trying circumstances. Instead of this, Mr. Miller has sacrificed all that was natural and reasonable in the incident to a desire to burn 'Revels' and the squaw to death, and let Carson plunge naked in the Brazos with no companion but a blind and singed horse, and a million or so of half-roasted buffaloes."

Foreign Items.

THE fact that the public gaming-places in Germany will soon be closed forever has so enhanced the value of property at Monaco, the only place where "roulette" and "trente et quarante" will hold sway next year, that French and English capitalists have purchased the houses of a number of burghers and peasants, in order to erect large hotels in their steads. The Prince of Monaco, who formerly demanded two million dollars for his picturesque little principality, now asks double the

sum. It is not altogether improbable, however, that the great powers of Europe may take the matter in hand, and compel Prince Charles of Monaco to put a stop to public gambling in his dominions.

If Dame Rumor tells the truth, things at the Russian court are not altogether smooth. The differences between the grand-duke hereditary and the emperor are said to be constantly on the increase. The grand-duke is a fanatical adherent of the national or Old Russian party, and he discards all those foreign customs which have heretofore been prevalent at the court of St. Petersburg. He converses only in Russian, and allows no one to address him in a foreign language unless it is a foreigner. His father likes best to speak German, and it is said to be amusing to listen to a conversation between him speaking in the language of his wife and mother, and his eldest son, who answers in Russian. The emperor, it is reported also, does not wish his eldest son to succeed him, but that his brother Constantine should be emperor after him.

Jules Janin's oration on Ste.-Beuve, which he delivered upon his reception at the French Academy, is praised by all the French critics as a model of style, wit, and eloquence. It abounded in anecdotes about the great critic. Among other things, Jules Janin related of his deceased friend, with whom he came in his youth to Paris, that Ste.-Beuve, in the afternoon of the first day, had just two francs left to buy a meal with; he saw on the way to the restaurant a copy of Homer's "Odyssey," for which the dealer demanded two francs. Ste.-Beuve bought the book immediately, and went that night hungry to bed.

It has been ascertained that the Emperor Napoleon III. is very fond of drinking Johannisberger wine, and that Prince Richard Metternich, who owns Castle Johannisberg, in order to ingratiate himself with Napoleon, allowed him to purchase, since the year 1860, nearly all the good wine raised in that famous locality. The outsiders, who paid since that time enormous prices for what they believed to be excellent Johannisberger may, therefore, take it for granted that the agents of the prince took advantage of them.

It costs nothing to record a mortgage in Russia, one dollar in Germany, three dollars in France, and five dollars in Italy. In Turkey no property-owner can give a mortgage on his real estate. When he loans money on it, he has to obtain a permit from the magistrates of his city or town, and they see to it that he pays his creditor at the appointed time. A Russian emancipated serf cannot sell his property except when the whole of the tax-payers in his community allow him to do so.

The German *Police News*, a journal circulating only among police-officers, contains the following item: "There are in New York at present seventeen persons who have fled from Germany with large amounts of money. Only one of them is in good circumstances. The rest of them have spent their ill-gotten gains in the course of a few months. Two of them are now bar-keepers at a low concert-saloon on the Bowery."

Madame Marie Seebach does not like the United States. She writes to the Vienna *Press* that she never felt more ill at ease than when she was in America, and that she never was able to get there a decent meal. The reason was that she was too parsimonious to pay for one. While in this country, she generally

lodged at third-class hotels, from motives of economy.

The Grand-duke Alexis is, after all, not to marry the pretty Princess Thyra of Denmark. That honor is reserved, the Copenhagen papers assure us semi-officially, to King Louis of Bavaria. Nor is Alexis to get the piquant daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, who is reported to be destined for a wealthy English lord.

Gounod told, recently, a friend that he was not wealthy, as was generally supposed, but had barely a moderate competence. He said he was a lover of fine oil-paintings, and had bought a great many of them; but, not being a very good connoisseur, he had generally paid too high prices for them, and had often been badly cheated.

The annual report of the Minister of Justice of the Grand-duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin contains the following edifying passage: "Ninety-four men and thirty-three women were flogged during the year. They received altogether twenty-six hundred and four lashes."

President Thiers receives every day on an average one hundred and fifty applications for the Cross of the Legion of Honor. It is said that Marshals Bazaine and Lebœuf, and Generals Frossard and De Failly, who are all grand officers of the order, will be certainly expelled from it.

Russia is the paradise of woman's-rights advocates. Man and wife always own their property separately, and instances of wives suing their husbands for debt are of frequent occurrence. Still, Russia has no paper advocating woman's rights.

The King of Denmark, who was twice shot at, came near losing his life recently at Darmstadt, in consequence of the careless manner in which he handled a loaded revolver. He escaped with the loss of three fingers of his right hand.

A correspondent of the Augsburg *Universal Gazette*, writes from Omaha, Nebraska, that that place is the most wicked in North America. He says that New York, Philadelphia, and even Cincinnati, cannot compare with Omaha in that respect.

Paris has now thirty-four political dailies. The latest accessions to the list are M. Gambetta's *République Française*, and Gustave Chandal's *XXI^e Siècle*. Victorien Sardou and Erckmann-Chatrian have engaged to write the *feuilleton* for the latter paper.

Ferdinand Landmann is the name of the criminal who was hanged at Darmstadt for having assassinated his father. The old man refused to give his bad son twenty-five cents, and that was the cause of the murder.

Prince Charles of Hohenzollern, the Grand-duke of Roumania, is married to a young Italian woman whose acquaintance he made at Genoa the year before he became ruler of the Danubian Principalities.

The *Journal des Débats*, the most influential of the Paris papers, says that there is reason to believe that the *Courrier des Etats-Unis* in New York has a larger circulation than any paper published in France.

L'Illustration and *L'Univers Illustré*, the two most popular of illustrated French papers, have together only a circulation of thirty-five thousand copies.

The Emperor Alexander of Russia is believed to be the most indolent of European monarchs. He speaks Russian with a strong German accent, and the malcontents of Russia call him in consequence, "Our German father."

A Jewish rabbi at Ingolstadt has published "Notes on the Old Testament," which Biblical scholars say are the most valuable contribution to that class of literature which has appeared for many years past.

The son of General Dombrowsky, who was killed during the Communist insurrection in Paris, is a dancing-master at Christiania, in Norway.

The book-trade in Spain is in a flourishing condition. There are at present ninety-four retail book-stores in Madrid, fifty-one more than during the reign of Queen Isabella II.

There is but one Englishman in a German state-prison. Three American men and one American woman are confined in German penitentiaries.

The King of Bavaria, they say at Munich, does not want to marry any princess, because he is clandestinely married to the widow of one of his former ministers.

The Empress of Germany has written to Alfred Tennyson a letter, in which she invites him to take up his abode in Berlin, and to become her private secretary.

The Prussian prefect at Strasburg has prohibited the public performances of negro minstrels in that city.

Marie Taglioni, the celebrated *danses*, announces that she will open a dancing-school in London.

The Cotta publishing-house offers the Augsburg *Universal Gazette* for sale. The *Gazette* is considered the best paper in Germany.

It is a singular fact that both the pope and the sultan are very fond of reading French novels.

Garibaldi has left the International Association in consequence of an insulting letter which Carl Marx wrote to him.

The Austrian ministry is composed of one Austrian, two Prussians, two Bavarians, and three Wurtembergers.

George Sand was married, on the 25th of September, to a nephew of General Ducrot.

The London *Times* has fourteen correspondents in Germany.

Louise Mühlbach has written a new work entitled "The Horrors of Venice."

The income of the Russian grand-dukes is twenty-five thousand dollars a year.

A Swede named Larsen is considered the best billiard-player in Europe.

Ex-Queen Isabella of Spain is suffering from dropsy of the heart.

President Thiers never sleeps more than five hours.

The combined Parliaments of Europe contain a large majority of liberals.

Emilio Castellar intends to leave Spain and settle in Paris.

Paul de Cassagnac has already fought three duels since his return to Paris. Nobody hurt.

Varieties.

At present, in Hungary, there are published, in the Hungarian language, sixteen daily newspapers, one hundred and six weeklies, and fifty-three monthlies, having an aggregate of about one hundred and thirty-six thousand seven hundred subscribers. There are also published in Hungary, in the German language, fifteen daily newspapers, sixty weeklies, and eight monthlies, having in the aggregate ninety-seven thousand eight hundred subscribers. There are also published, in the Slavonic language, two dailies, thirty-one weeklies, and fifteen monthlies, having thirty thousand nine hundred and fifty subscribers in the aggregate. In the Wallachian language there are published eleven different newspapers, having a circulation of seven thousand eight hundred copies. In the Italian there are three newspapers published, having about twenty-two hundred subscribers. The number of journalists and writers attached to these papers is five hundred and thirty-four.

The business of piano-making has become one of the great industries of the country. A piano, thirty years ago, was an exceptional luxury; but now it is found in almost every parlor, and may even be met with in the wildernesses of the far West. So greatly has this business extended that the Weber Company claim their trade to have increased, during the past three years, three hundred and eighty per cent.—a very surprising fact, indeed, as doubtless all other large houses have also correspondingly enlarged their trade in this popular instrument. The "Weber" piano, how-

ever, is a great favorite, and has been gaining in public appreciation. The Chickering piano is famous the world over, and maintains its place in general estimation, notwithstanding the number of new rivals. We would suggest to strangers in New York to visit the splendid rooms of the Messrs. Chickering, in Eighteenth Street, and see their superb display of pianos. The Weber rooms, which equally invite the attention of visitors, are in Fifth Avenue, at the corner of Sixteenth Street.

The London *Spectator* makes a strong appeal for a woman's university. It says there can be no doubt that on many of the most delicate and difficult questions involved in our modern civilization we greatly need the fine judgment of really educated women, and has no fear that cultivated women will rush into extremes and turn the world upside down.

Elder Evan, the Shaker, now in London, hath a ready wit at times. On being asked, the other day, which were the qualities most appreciated in the females at Mount Lebanon, he replied: "The woman who maketh a good pudding is always more valued by us than she who maketh a tart reply."

A gentleman, not long since, wishing to pop the question, did it in the following singular manner: Taking up the young lady's cat, he said: "Pussy, may I have your mistress?" It was answered by the lady, who said, "Say yes, Pussy."

It has been proved that silk resists decay underground for a longer period than any other textile fabric.

A man arrested as a vagrant protested that he had a regular trade or calling, viz., smoking glass for total eclipses of the sun; and, as these occur only a few times in a century, he was not to blame for being out of employment a good deal.

The curate of Liverpool says that the reason why so many Englishmen, in signing the marriage-register, simply make their mark, is because they are too drunk to write their names.

"My dear doctor," said a lady, "I suffer a great deal with my eyes." "Be patient, madam," he replied; "you would probably suffer a great deal more without them."

"What substitute can there be for the endearments of one's sister?" exclaimed Mary. "The endearments of some other fellow's sister," replied John.

From an astronomical point of view, Alexis may be said to represent the constellation of Ursus Minor, since he is the junior of the Great Bear.

A motion is now before the Swiss Council making it a penal offence to ascend the Alps at certain seasons of the year.

The heathen Chinese of California have contributed nearly fifteen hundred dollars to the sufferers by the Chicago fire.

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Women now manage most of the public libraries in Massachusetts.

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The author of "Morton House" and "Valerie Palmer," the most successful of recent American novels, will contribute stories and sketches frequently during the year.

JULIAN HAWTHORNE, son of the distinguished romancist, will continue to contribute poems and stories to the JOURNAL. This young writer exhibits, it is generally conceded, not a little of that peculiar and original genius which has made the name of Hawthorne so famous in English literature.

Colonel JOHN HAY, the brilliant author of "Little Breeches," "Jim Blodsoe," and "Castilian Days," will contribute occasionally.

R. H. STODDARD will furnish occasional biographies of the poets.

"LADY SWEETAPPLE; OR, THREE TO ONE," a brilliant novel, by the author of "Annals of an Eventful Life," will form the leading serial during the early part of the year.

"GOOD-BYE, SWEETHEART!" a novel of singular charm and freshness, from the brilliant and vivacious pen of RHONA BROUGHTON, author of "Red as a Rose is She," etc., is now publishing in its pages.

PROFESSOR SCHOLE DE VERE, of the University of Virginia, will continue his series of highly-entertaining papers on popular science.

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JOHN ESTEN COOKE, of Virginia, PAUL H. HAYNE, of Georgia, and F. B. GOULDING (author of "The Marooners"), will furnish sketches of Southern life, character, and places.

A series of good-natured satires, under the title of "The Habits of Good Society," from the pencil of Mr. Thomas Worth, will supply an amusing feature.

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